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ABSTRACT

Four issues of a University of California, Los Angeles, (UCLA) newsletter by and for teaching assistants (TAs) are presented, with focus on course syllabi, sexism, teacher evaluation, and foreign TAs. Consideration is given to: a positive classroom atmosphere; myths of college instruction; use of classroom tests; lecture methods; the "abused student syndrome;" relating to students; helping students with problems; sex discrimination in career counseling and student services, the curricula, tenure awards, scholarships, equal pay for staff, and staff behavior; women TAs as teachers or scholars; myths about sexual harassment; the sexual harassment survey at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA); UCLA's sexual harassment policy and procedures for implementing the policy; the reliability of student ratings of teacher performance; interpreting course evaluations; peer observation of teaching; analyzing a videotape; improving foreign TA's spoken English; cultural assumptions in the U.S. classroom; useful phrases for classroom communication; and SPEAK (UCLA's Test of Spoken English). UCLA resources for foreign TAs are described, and 10 outstanding articles on teaching in general are summarized. A midterm evaluation form is included. (SW)

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The materials in the Special Collection on the Training of Teaching Assistants were developed through the active efforts of numerous educators who first met at the 1986 National Conference on the Institutional Responsibilities and Responses in the Employment and Education of Teaching Assistants held at the Ohio State University. Assisted by more than 80 individuals, the committee chairs listed below were able to establish the collection which will be developed and maintained by the ERIC Clearinghouse for Higher Education. This arrangement will enable faculty members, faculty developers, administrators, TA supervisors, and graduate teaching assistants to have access to TA training materials produced by institutions across the nation.

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the TA at UCLA NEWSLETTER

WINTER 1986 ISSUE #16

Instructors, Students, and the Syllabus

When teaching a course to undergraduates, we tend to forget that what we know—about our disciplines, about our goals, about our teaching methods—is not known (or agreed upon) by everyone. We seem to assume that our colleagues and our students will intuitively be able to reconstruct the creature we see in our mind's eye from the few bones we give them in the syllabus.

Bad syllabi seem to fall into one of two categories:

The "listers" merely specify which books or chapters will be read during the weeks, without a hint about the principles behind the selection. The most puzzling of this type assign chapters in the textbooks in an order considerably different from the order intended by the authors. At best, such modification gives students the impression that the teacher is improving on the original organization for some as yet unrevealed purpose; at worst, it gives students the idea that one structure is no less logical or coherent than another, and that all parts are interchangeable and equally valid.

The "scolders" give brief descriptions of content and lengthy sets of instructions detailing what will happen if a student comes in late or leaves early, hands in a paper after the deadline, misses an exam, fails to follow the rules for margins and double-spacing, or does not participate in class discussion. The scolders often sound more like lawyers than professors. Undoubtedly the syllabus as legal document has evolved because so often students demand that their teachers provide a set of rules, probably to give the students something concrete to cling to as they struggle with the content of the course. If even sophisticated scholars fall into the trap of equating quantitative data with significance, it's not surprising that students mistake the rules for the meaning.

Here are some questions one might find unanswered even in wonderful syllabi for wonderful courses:

- Why should a student want to take this course? How does it make a difference as part of the discipline? How does it fit into the general-education program?
- What are the objectives of the course? Where does it lead, intellectually and practically? Students should be able to find out what they will know by the end of the course, and also what they will be able to do better afterward than before. Is the purpose of the course to increase their problem-solving abilities, improve their communication skills, sharpen their understanding of moral ambiguities, allow them to translate knowledge from one context to another? Why are the objectives important, and how will different parts of the course help students accomplish those objectives?
- What are the prerequisites? Students should be given some idea about what they should already know and what skills they should already have before taking the course, so they can realistically assess their readiness. Will they be expected to know how to compare and contrast, to analyze and synthesize, or will they be taught those skills during the course?
- Why do the parts of the course come in the order they do? Most syllabi note the order in which topics will be discussed, but make no attempt to explain the way the professor has chosen to organize the course. Sections of the syllabus are usually titled, but only infrequently are questions provided for students to help them put the reading assignments and homework into context.
- Will the course be primarily lectures, discussions, or group work? When a percentage of the grade is for "class participation," what does the professor expect from the students—regular attendance? questions? answers to questions? Will the students

in this issue:

IMPROVING CLASSROOM RELATIONSHIPS

be given alternative ways to achieve success in the class, based on different learning styles?

- What is the purpose of the assignments? Students are frequently told how much an assignment will "count" and how many pages long it must be, but they are rarely given any idea about what it will demand of them or what the goal is. Will students be required to describe, discuss, analyze, provide evidence, criticize, defend, compare, apply? To what end? If students are expected to present a project before the class, are the criteria for an excellent presentation made clear?
- What will the tests test? Memory? Understanding? Ability to synthesize? To present evidence logically? To apply knowledge in a new context?
- Why have the books been chosen? What is their relative importance in the course and in the discipline? Is the emphasis in the course on primary or secondary materials and why?

"Well," you may say, "the syllabus isn't the course—everything will be made clear as the semester progresses." Or, "I can't ask my overworked secretary to type a 12-page syllabus." Or, "Students are interested only in the numbers—of books, pages to read, written assignments, questions on the exam." Or, "a syllabus with all that information is too static—it doesn't allow me the flexibility to be creative on the spur of the moment." Maybe those are relevant objections—and maybe they are excuses for badly-thought-out, hurriedly patched-together efforts. Whatever the rationale, I believe that the inadequate syllabus is a symptom of a larger problem—the lack of communication between teachers and students.

Most of the latest reports on undergraduate education have in common the criticism that faculty members and students no longer seem to be connecting. Our students do not seem to be involved in learning, they say. We seem to have lost the ability to create a shared community of values; we have substituted diversity for coherence and cannot find our way back to integrating principles. However, these reports all seem to ignore a very real wish among students and faculty members to find a place of meeting.

The syllabus is a small place to start bringing students and faculty members back together, of course, and its improvement is not the revolutionary gesture that curriculum reform seems to be. But if students could be persuaded that we are really interested in their understanding the material we offer, that we support their efforts to master it, and that we take their intellectual struggles seriously, they might respond by becoming more involved in our courses, by trying to live up to our expectations, and by appreciating our concern.

Then the real work of learning can begin.

Sharon Rubin
University of Maryland

Prepare Students for a Lecture

1. Make it clear in advance that each lecture is based directly on certain required readings and other preparatory activities.

2. Provide a list of the vocabulary, main concepts, and other key points that should be studied or reviewed prior to the lecture.

3. Provide a list of questions for guidance or required completion from readings prior to the lecture.

4. Give a quiz at the start of the period covering preparatory materials and activities.

Notes on Creating a Positive Classroom Atmosphere

The atmosphere you create should communicate to students that you are moving toward them and with them, rather than away from or against them. In effect, the goal should be to demonstrate that your mutual experience is not to be adversarial but cooperative. There are conditions and events which can cause positive or negative influences on instructor-student relationships. The following paragraphs briefly discuss some of these influences and their effects.

Confidence versus Anxiety

Anxiety occurs in many students who are concerned with failure or with their inability to live up to unrealistic expectations they have for themselves or believe you have for them. Anxiety occurs when instructors threaten failure and reinforce it by continued inattention to and adverse criticism of student work or participation.

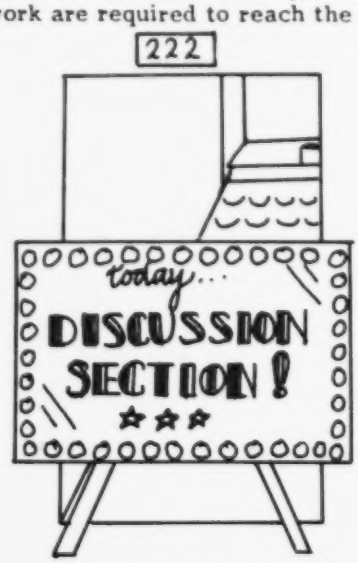
Instructors often communicate that they expect failure by reinforcing an already existing low level of confidence: "You probably won't understand this assignment, but try anyway." It is preferable to show that a reasonable effort by the student is worth making, and that learning can bring pleasure, and a sense of achievement. Set realistic levels of expectations for the students by the way you make assignments, give presentations, conduct discussions, and set examinations. You can do much toward motivating students' learning and building confidence through acknowledging their comments and ideas, encouraging them in their pursuit of learning, and in recognizing their achievements.

(continued on next page)

Challenge versus Frustration

If students are unclear or confused about the procedures in the course, the materials to be covered, or the work that is expected of them, they may become frustrated. Frustration occurs when students are blocked from achieving the goals which are set, or when they feel the goals are inappropriate or unclear. Students may also experience frustration from readings or other work which seem unclear or unnecessarily difficult. You are often in the position where you must clarify or reinterpret such information either in class or out of class.

You may have to reassess the level of knowledge and experience of your students each quarter to ascertain whether readings or assignments are too elementary or too advanced. When students experience challenge in a class, they usually feel they are able to do the work which is required. They have adequate information about how to proceed and about what is expected, yet they recognize that creative effort, study, and work are required to reach the



objectives specified. Therefore, be as clear as you can in discussing course objectives, assignments, grading procedures and policies, and any other matters which involve an expected product or response.

Self-Respect versus Humiliation

Humiliating moments in classrooms are part of the experience of almost every person. Humiliation is a feeling which strips away self-confidence and self-respect. When associated with classroom or other educational experiences, humiliation can reduce motivation for learning. Often we embarrass others even though we had no intention of doing so. The key is in the student interpretation of the intent. If students feel that they are being ridiculed or embarrassed as a joke, instructors run a high risk of losing their cooperation.

Instructors can avoid engendering a loss of self-respect in their students by not making premature comparisons of their performance with that of other students in the classes and by not belittling their responses, ideas, or efforts. Keep in mind that it is often quite difficult for some students to ask for help or explanations. In effect, try to be encouraging and accepting, and don't humiliate or embarrass anyone who has asked for your help.

Inquisitiveness versus Boredom

Motivating the inquisitiveness of your students depends upon your interest and enthusiasm as much as upon the interest and experience they bring with them to the class. Enthusiasm on the part of the instructor can enhance and stimulate student interest. If you are bored with what you teach or how you teach, undoubtedly your students will also be bored.

Instructors can both sense and observe when their students are bored in class. Cues and signs are there: doodling, vacant stares, reading, nodding off, etc. Often students are bored with out-of-class assignments as well, communicating this to you covertly by showing little effort or creativity in their work. In lecture classes, the causes are

numerous--including your voice quality, pace of speech, use of language, ambiguity of statements, lack of examples, and failure to activate student participation during the lecture. Another cause of boredom in some courses is required reading that is not clearly or interestingly written, or is too advanced or too elementary. Class assignments may be frustrating and not challenging, sometimes requiring effort beyond the value of the experience, or lacking relevance to clear objectives.

You might try to examine these factors of which you are aware from your experiences—both as an instructor and student. Consider them with your colleagues who share your concern and arrange for your students to give you their reactions and suggestions: What interests them most? What interests them least? What kinds of classroom presentation and interaction hold their attention the most? Why? Often, the opportunity for students to make some choices about topics or subject matter to be covered in class and types of assignments can lessen boredom. The mere fact that you ask them for suggestions may spark ideas that you and they had not considered.

Ten Myths of College Instruction

Professor Robert Glaser of the University of Pittsburg has examined what present knowledge of the learning process has to suggest for the conduct of instruction in a university classroom. In the process, he began to take a close look at the characteristics and the conditions under which he conducted his own college classes—which he believes are no better and no worse than those of a good many of the classes of colleagues. What became apparent in his analysis were the assumptions underlying some present teaching practices—assumptions that, by and large, did not represent things most instructors really believe or preach to their students. However, they are assumptions which are revealed in the structure of many courses and the behavior of college instructors.

With this in mind, Professor Glaser presented the following ten major myths of college instruction. In the usual conduct of college classes, many instructors act as if the following were true:

1. That the specific knowledge acquired by the student is related to the long range educational goals that exist in the mind of the instructor.

2. That the aptitudes, achievements, and backgrounds of the students in a classroom are approximately equal.

3. That aptitude is more important than previous achievement for the attainment of knowledge.

4. That all people learn in the same way and take approximately the same amount of time to learn the same thing.

5. That listening to lectures and reading books are powerful means for changing student behavior.

6. That students retain knowledge without requiring much review and relearning.

7. That course grades tell us what a student knows and can do.

8. That a college instructor is, by virtue of his title, a good communicator of knowledge.

9. That teaching is an art that requires no tools and no underlying technology.

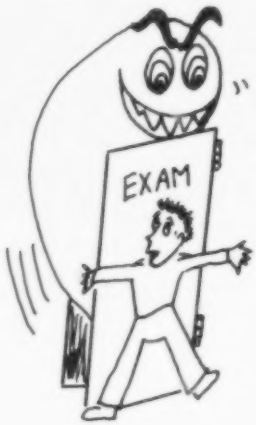
10. That the structure imposed upon knowledge by a discipline is the best structure for transmitting that knowledge to students.

Using Classroom Examinations Wisely

1. Announce examinations well in advance of administering them so that student may prepare themselves. It is important to recognize that often when a student spends time studying for an exam, learning about a topic can be solidified beyond what might be accomplished only by attending a lecture or completing a homework assignment.

2. You should indicate clearly the objectives which will be measured by the examination so that students know for what to prepare. Over a period of time, try to examine the whole range of course objectives—including those requiring simple recall and higher levels of intellectual skills.

3. Try to use examinations periodically through a course, rather than only at mid-term



time and at the end of the course. Weekly or end-of-topic exams can give you a better indication of student learning and students will be aware of their own progress and the direction for whatever additional study might be needed.

4. Students might be provided with the examination results promptly—that is, within a few days after it is taken. Unless students receive feedback on an exam within a short time, the value of the examination is reduced and the benefits of timely correction of misinformation and incorrect ideas may be lost.

5. You should try to review examination questions with students, or provide the correct answers and an opportunity for discussion on an individual basis. For some students, this review may be as valuable a learning experience as preparation for the examination itself.

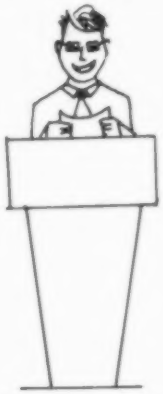
6. Minimize the threat of examinations by observing the above suggestions so that students will come to view examinations as an integral part of their learning experience. In addition, they may come to view the process as an opportunity to demonstrate their accomplishments in the course.

Comparing Lecture Methods

The Formal Method

Advantages

- Large amounts of content can be covered during the period.
- The instructor can maintain the continuity and flow of ideas, presenting materials as planned for the time period.
- It is convenient for maintaining a planned schedule for treating the content adequately.



Formal

Disadvantages

- It does not permit students to raise questions or make comments at opportune times.
- It reinforces the passive acceptance of the presentation.
- It limits the amount of information on how and whether students are achieving lecture objectives.

The Informal Method

Advantages

- It encourages students to be more active during the period.
- It allows instructors to ask questions that check levels of student understanding and the effectiveness of instructor communication.
- Students are able to raise points and get guidance while the topic is being presented.
- Opportunities are created for the spontaneous exploration and follow-up of new ideas.
- Clues are provided for improving future lectures on the topic.

Informal

Disadvantages

- Not all students will ask questions voluntarily.
- The continuity of the lecture may be disrupted since the instructor can be drawn away from the content being presented.
- The planned time schedule may be upset.
- Questions by some students may be of little interest or value to other students.
- The spontaneous activities for a few in class may be distracting or frustrating to others.

The Abused Student Syndrome

The Abused Student Syndrome is a concept developed by Miryea Lund of Student Psychological Services and refers to a manifestation of stress. A large university is not geared toward the individual. This may create mindless and unfair pressures with which the student needs to learn to cope. A number of different but simultaneous situations may create difficulties for the student that become so vast, the overall situation appears hopeless. Since the student can't change what is happening, coping strategies must be developed.

The following are some of the elements that contribute to the Abused Student Syndrome:

1. The student may study and know the materials, but the test is not fair and consequently he/she fails the exam.

2. Problems may arise in human relations where the student does not always get what he/she wants.

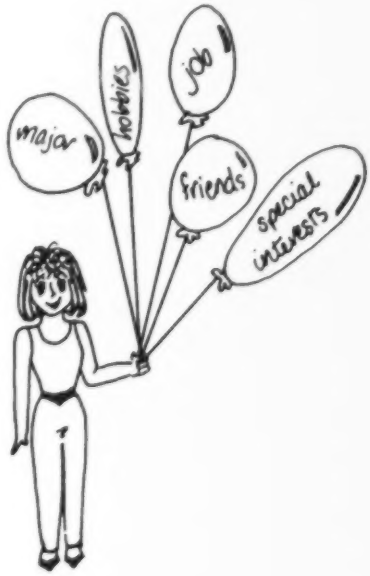
3. Some professors utilize scare tactics that create manufactured fears of the professor, course, or both.

4. Some TAs can't help students or are lazy; thus the students have nowhere to turn for much needed help with homework, class content, etc.

5. Occasionally a student may experience discrimination. In addition to the more widely acknowledged forms of discrimination (e.g., sex, race), the student may be discriminated against because he/she is fat, ugly, physically handicapped, etc.

Relating to Students as Individuals

Brief Questionnaires. Students might be asked to complete brief questionnaires in class which describe their backgrounds and interests relevant to the subject matter. One faculty member in the social sciences has asked students to describe their most memorable experience related to her course. Another faculty member who teaches a course on a particular region has asked students to relate travel experiences or knowledge of the peoples of this area through relatives, friends, vicarious reading, and the like. Typically,



these questionnaires include information on the student's major, prerequisite or related courses taken, job experiences, career plans, and so forth. Faculty members use this information to understand their students and to call on those whose experiences may give them a different perspective.

Learn Students' Names. Some teachers find that learning students' names requires concentration and repetition. One physical science professor, for example, asks students their names at every opportunity:

whenever they come to visit during office hours, whenever he sees a familiar face in the hallway, and whenever a student asks a question before or after class. Students are hungry for some recognition of their individuality, and they appreciate it enormously when instructors take time to learn their names. As a result, students are also much more attentive and committed to the subject matter.

Interact with Students. One instructor in the life sciences always tries to enter large lecture halls through the same door as students. While entering from the back of the room, she may pause and chat with students on either side of the aisle before class begins. "You have to get into the students' skins to really teach well," she believes. "It helps to see the classroom from their vantage point and to get a sense of the class from their perspective. Not enough faculty members do this. Among other things, it shows up on boardwork that can't be seen past the tenth row." Other instructors make a point of arriving at class ten minutes early each day and talk informally with students sitting in different sections of the room. One social science professor notes, "I try to target a different section each day to talk with students about the course or more general topics." In addition, this is one way of helping oneself remember names since they can be connected with a place, an interest, or a personality trait. This instructor, like many others, believes that addressing students by name helps break the excessive formality of large lecture classes and creates a more positive classroom environment.

Helping Students With Difficulties

Schedule Regular Meetings. It is a good idea to try and meet regularly with each student who does poorly on the midterm. One professor gives the first of two midterms early enough in the course to allow him to identify any student who may be having difficulty. After the first midterm, he asks each student who did not pass to talk with him about the exam results. In these meetings, he tries to discover each individual student's problem. He asks questions such as "Did I misread anything you gave as an answer?" or "What problems did you have in taking the exam?" Each meeting is concluded by telling the student that they can do better and that a bargain might be struck. For example, he has occasionally been willing to forgive the first midterm and allow the grade to be determined solely on the

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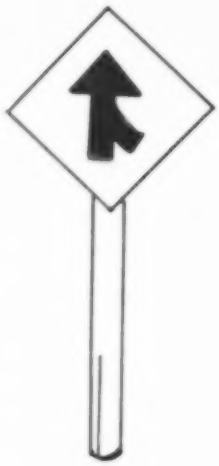
second midterm and final on the condition that the student meets with him or the TA regularly. Despite the obvious advantage to the student and added workload for the instructor, only nine or ten students actually follow through each term. However, for those students, a second chance proved to be a powerful motivator.

Integrate Weaker Students. It is possible to integrate weaker students into the class through small group work. For example, one foreign language teacher divides students into small groups. A question is posed to each group with one student assigned to give the answer orally, the second student corrects the first, and the third student writes the answer on the board. Each student has a role, and these roles are rotated throughout the quarter. Initially, weaker students are assigned to do the board work, although it should not be made in an obvious way. In this way, weaker students are able to participate and have their learning reinforced. One instructor has asked better students to help out if weaker ones are having difficulty responding. Then, the better students rephrase the question to the weaker ones to allow for some elaboration. Peer teaching can be extremely effective. A number of other excellent teachers have formed small peer teaching groups in discussion sections or labs, carefully integrating the weaker students into groups of average and above average ability.



merging slower students in

The Ten Best on Teaching

The following ten articles were identified by readers of Improving College and University Teaching (Vol. 32: 12-13) as the "ten best on teaching."

1. Bergquist, William H. and Phillips, Stephen R. **"Classroom Structures Which Encourage Student Participation."** In A Handbook for Faculty Development, vol. 1, 1975, pp. 118-120.

Organized in a quick-reference, table format, thirteen different methods for encouraging student participation are summarized. Some of the methods listed are: group discussion, symposium discussion, reaction sheets, and reverse thinking. For each method, the table presents a definition, information on when to use it, preparation and procedural suggestions, as well as limitations.

2. Bowman, Jr., Richard F. **"A 'Pac Man' Theory of Motivation: Technical Implications for Classroom Instruction."** Educational Technology 22 (September 1982): 14-16.

"Designing a humane, productive learning environment draws heavily upon one's beliefs about human nature, the nature of learning, and the interest and needs of one's students," asserts Bowman. And he claims designing a successful video center draws on the same considerations. However, on the whole, video arcades appear to be a good deal more successful that classrooms. Why? Because Professor "Pac Man" has learned some lessons about motivation many teachers have missed.

3. Dedrick, Charles and Froyen, Len. **"Motivation Maxims: Why They Fail to Motivate."** The Educational Forum 44 (March, 1980): 295-303.

Dedrick and Froyen identify some educational maxims they think are "refutable," because they represent obstacles to an accurate assessment of how motivation and learning work. As a result they "stand between teachers and sound educational practice." Example: "Learning is fun, and when it ceases to be fun, there is something perversely wrong with our ends or means." That's a motivation maxim Dedrick and Froyen want to "retire." In the article they explain why.

4. Eble, Kenneth. **"The Mythology of Teaching."** In The Craft of Teaching. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1981, pp. 9-21.

"No group is more full of myths

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about teaching, or more reluctant to admit that there are good teachers and bad teachers and more resistant to the notion that teaching skills can be acquired than teachers themselves." This Eble blames on a series of "dubious assumptions" made about the nature of teaching and learning and about the characteristics of teachers and students. In this chapter he tackles ten of them as a necessary step toward the development of the teaching craft.

5. Frederick, Peter. **"The Dreaded Discussion: Ten Ways to Start."** Improving College and University Teaching 30 (Summer, 1981): 109-114.

With precise and specific detail, Frederick suggests ten different techniques for starting classroom discussions. His methods are based on principles that should stimulate positive interactions. The ideas are innovative but not outrageous. They are practical, pragmatic possibilities applicable in a variety of classroom environments.

6. Glaser, Robert. **"Ten Untenable Assumptions of College Instruction."** Educational Record 49 (Spring, 1968): 154-159.

Upon examining the characteristics and conditions in his own college classes, Glaser discovers several assumptions underlying present teaching practices that are not tenable. They do not represent things faculty, in fact, believe about instruction. Example: "Listening to lectures and reading books are powerful means for modifying student behavior." Glaser's point is that lectures and readings are extremely valuable to accomplish some goals. "They are not, however, as useful for everything as the very extensive use of the lecture method and a reading assignment procedure would seem to imply."

7. Gross, Theodore L. **"Inside Room 307, Teaching: A Profession of Possibility."** Change 12 (January, 1980): 32-38.

The teaching profession is troubled--"buffeted by social crosswinds," observes this author. His analysis of the profession is pointed yet poignant. It concludes with a remarkable exposition of "quintessential" qualities that make teachers great and the profession still rich with possibility.

8. Hill, Nancy K. **"Scaling the Heights: The Teacher as Mountaineer."** In The Chronicle of Higher Education, June 16, 1980, p. 48.

Hill believes teachers need a new analogy—a fresh metaphor to capture the essence of the teaching-learning experience. In a truly inspirational piece, she suggests that mountaineering is an apt analogy. "The teacher is not a pleader, not a performer, not a huckster, but a confident, exuberant guide on expeditions of shared responsibility into the most exciting and least understood terrain on earth—the mind itself."

9. Knapp, Mark L. **"Communicating With Students."** Improving College and University Teaching 24 (Summer, 1976): 167-168.

Knapp holds that beliefs, feelings, and assumptions of teachers are the "air" of the learning environment and function rather directly to determine the quality of life within it. To that end, he describes "destudentized" classrooms where only content matters and juxtaposes those environments against climates where instructors are cognizant of critical communication variables.

10. Weaver, Richard L. **"Effective Lecturing Techniques: Alternatives to Classroom Boredom."** New Directions in Teaching 7 (Winter, 1982): 31-39.

Weaver posits four elements crucial to success in lecturing. Practical suggestions are given for gaining attention, maintaining interest, demonstrating desire, and utilizing action. He concludes by listing a set of characteristics his students considered to be most important for large-course instructors.

Credits

Our thanks to Miryea Lund of Student Psychological Services for allowing us to reprint her article on "The Abused Student Syndrome." In addition, the article entitled "Instructors, Students, and the Syllabus" appeared in the August 7, 1985 issue of the CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION. We would like to thank that publication and Sharon Rubin, the author, for allowing us to reprint that essay.

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the TA at UCLA NEWSLETTER

SPRING 1986 ISSUE #17

Women and Sexism in Higher Education

The Project on the Status and Education of Women reports that women students and faculty are less likely to advance as far or as fast as their male peers. The Project argues that insufficient informal guidance and sponsorship of female students, especially graduate students, accounts for many of the disparities between female and male advancement in academe. As in business, success in academe often depends on the encouragement, guidance, support, and advocacy received from those who are established in the system.

Members of professional peer systems tend to choose persons most like themselves as proteges; in institutions where senior faculty and administrators are predominantly white and male, women and minorities are often excluded from the long-established informal networking systems. Male faculty members or administrators may hesitate to mentor women students, faculty, and administrators because they have preconceived notions about the appropriate behaviors, abilities, career directions and personal goals of women. They may fear that women's "overvisibility" in certain settings may make their failures more prominent than those of men. Women may be viewed as poor risks for future achievement because they are attending school part-time or are single parents, etc. (i.e., because they are "non-traditional"); or because males who might become mentors fear rumors of sexual involvement with women students or junior faculty.

Women faculty and administrators who can serve as mentors are often hard to find. The few who exist are sought out by increasing numbers of women students, junior faculty, and administrators. They may also be appointed to innumerable committees which need representation from women, and feel pressures to "overachieve" in order to advance as far as their male colleagues.

Women faculty and administrators are prevented from acting as mentors because they are overburdened with the responsibilities of being "tokens." The paucity of women in powerful positions in higher education as **role models** or inspirations for women students or junior colleagues acts as a barrier to female acnievement. A task force of the American Psychological Association cited a number of factors responsible for the scarcity of female role models for women graduate students doing research:

- Women are disproportionately employed in 2-year and liberal arts colleges where research productivity is less important than at the university level.
- Women researchers act as sponsors of new research only about 15% of the time.
- Males (41%) more frequently report that they are offered authorships for research participation than females (19%).

Although women constituted 51.5% of all student enrolled in higher education in 1980, in that same year women held only 26% of full-time faculty positions, only 10% of the professorships, and earned only 85% of the salaries that their male colleagues did. In 1982, 18% of the full-time faculty at UCLA were women. There were 3 female faculty for every 100 female students, while there were 13 male faculty for every 100 male students. As of 1982, women chaired 5 of 66 departments.

Even if all women faculty members had outstanding publishing, research, and teaching records, and were able and willing to act as mentors for all the women students in need of guidance and advocacy, the fact that so few of them are awarded tenure or given remuneration equal to that of their male colleagues is a message from those in power about women's place in higher education. This reduces the possibilities for women faculty members to be effective inspirations for women trying to achieve in higher education.

Chilly Classroom Climate for Women Students

When institutions as diverse as Oberlin College, Yale, University of Wisconsin, Harvard, UC

in this issue:

SEXISM AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Berkeley, Brown, and Dartmouth conducted research to determine how adequately their institutions were meeting the needs of women students, they found that the institutional atmosphere plays as important a role in fostering or impeding women's achievement as official policies.

The findings of these surveys and research have been collected and summarized by the Project on the Status and Education of Women in their paper, **"The Classroom Climate: A Chilly One for Women?"** All the examples quoted or described in this paper are actual incidents that have occurred on campuses within the last few years. The discriminatory behavior ranges from professors' overtly discriminatory comments (or those of students which the professor does not comment on) to subtle, inadvertent messages given to women in class. Faculty may treat men and women students differently in the following manner:

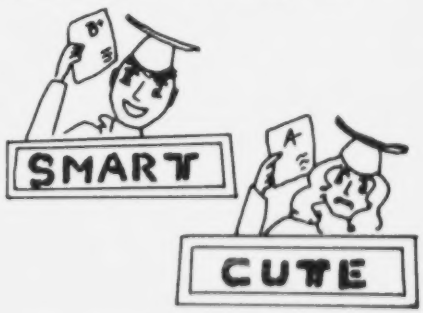
- Making comments that disparage women in general, their intellectual ability, and academic commitment.
- By diverting discussion of a woman student's work toward a discussion of her physical appearance.
- By referring to males as "men" but to females as "girls," "gals," etc., rather than "women."
- By relying on sexist humor as a classroom device.
- Making eye contact more often with men than with women.
- Nodding and gesturing more often in response to men's questions and comments than to women's.
- Interrupting women while they are making comments more often that men.
- Grouping students according to sex, especially in a way which implies that women students are not as competent as or do not have status equal to men.
- Addressing the class as if no women were present.
- Calling men students by name more often than women students.
- Phrasing classroom examples in a way which reinforces a stereotyped and negative view of women's psychological traits.
- Using classroom examples that reflect stereotyped ideas about men's and women's social and professional roles.
- Making direct sexual overtures.

Women students have reported being discouraged, angered or confused by these subtle and overt verbal and nonverbal behaviors—feelings not conducive to a good learning experience. The sexist behavior and attitudes communicated to a woman student by faculty or other students can undermine her self-confidence and foster feelings of helplessness or marginality whether or not she is aware of the sexist nature, unfairness, or outrageousness of the behavior. In any case, the woman is made to constantly be aware of her difference from those established in the system.

Institution as Microcosm

The "chilly" classroom climate in which many women students experience their formal education is harmful not only because of the impediments it presents to female achievement in specific classes, but because it also reinforces earlier sexist educational experiences and contributes to the sex role confusion that is intensified for young women, and men take women's increased options for achievement for granted. In reality, women's options have increased while old expectations that women should be homemakers and engage in work that complements that of men still exert a powerful influence in the minds of those in power in educational institutions and in the minds of women themselves. Consequently, women students are faced with pressures related to how they see their role in society before they entered, while they are in, and when they leave college.

Educational institutions can contribute to the role confusion young women students may suffer if they ignore classroom climates that foster sexism. Women's feelings of personal integrity are inseparable from their ability to think independently and take intellectual



risks. The problems of rape and sexual harassment have origins outside of and extend beyond the realm of higher education, but the prevalence of rape and sexual assault on college campuses—or the fear of these problems—is relevant to an educational institution's understanding of how personal integrity may be threatened in an academic community. As

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Adrienne Rich noted, "the undermining of self, of a woman's sense of her right to occupy space and walk freely in the world is deeply relevant to education." Many colleges are addressing the problems of rape and sexual assault through sexual assault awareness programs and services and by setting up official grievance procedures for sexual harassment. However, commitment to "coeducation" demands more than a variety of services and policies to combat the more serious manifestations of sexism.

Higher education has a leadership role in the community at large; the abolition of discrimination based on sex by a commitment that is visible in an institution's career counseling, student services, curricula, awards of tenure, awards of scholarships, equal pay for faculty and staff, and scrutiny into the discriminatory behaviour of its faculty, will serve as a measure of how well it is serving the humanistic goals it professes.

Mary Desjardins
Women's Resource Center

"I am even more ashamed to admit that out of my desire to be taken seriously as a physicist I was eager to avoid identification with other women students who I felt could not be taken seriously."

Evelyn Fox Keller

"I expected the graduate experience to be different. I expected that my major advisor would be my mentor. I have received very little time. I have noticed that male students seem to develop different kinds of relationships with professors and get more help and support."

Anonymous

Women TAs — Teachers or Scholars?

A Professional Dilemma

Practically all women graduate students face the task of teaching their discipline to students at some point in their career. For many women, this experience first takes the form of a teaching assistantship during their graduate study. Without denying the variations across disciplines and the numerous individual differences that will characterize each T.A.'s experiences, it can be argued that all women T.A.s (and some men) must confront a professional dilemma--whether to define their role as a "teacher" or as a "scholar."

In order to fully understand this potential dilemma for women T.A.s, further delineation of the distinction between the roles of the "teacher" and "professor" or "scholar" is necessary. In her research on "academic women," Jessie Bernard (1964:115-20) offers the following four ways of conceptualizing these different roles:

1) The role of the teacher is to serve as an instrument of communication; the role of the scholar is to serve as a collaborator with the original author.

2) The teacher often deals with the established, hence usually elementary, aspects of the discipline--thus conserving, not innovating. The scholar deals with controversial, hence usually with advanced, aspects of her discipline.

3) The teacher is often performing her role in a required course, one in which the interest of the student cannot be taken for granted. Because the student can use refusal to learn as a strategic weapon against the teacher, the teacher is usually surrounded with powerful weapons of deterrence—i.e., grades. There is less likely to be this kind of conflict between the student and the scholar. There exists a joint enterprise in which motivation is assumed on the part of the student, and both share an enthusiasm for the subject matter.

4) Both the teacher and the scholar must serve as role models for their students; but they do so in quite different ways. The teacher is expected to socialize students into their citizenship roles, a process which has moral implications, while the scholar functions to inculcate students into their intellectual, professional roles.

These functional distinctions between the roles of teacher and scholar help to explain why women have historically made their most important contributions to academia as teachers, both at the bottom of the academic hierarchy and at the professional school level, and to a greater extent in some fields than in others.

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Research shows that the areas where women have made their major contributions as teachers have been where they were backed with the weight of definitive bodies of knowledge about which relatively little controversy or few differences of interpretation exist (Bernard:125). Under these conditions, they were not required to defend a position, being primarily agents of transmission. Gender as such is apparently no handicap in this kind of role, but in less defined, or established areas the issue of competence becomes more problematic, and the scholar role seems to be demanded.

That the major contributions of women to the academic enterprise should have been as teachers is related also, presumably, to the fact that the role of teacher is consonant with that of other roles assigned to women in our society (namely, "emotion-management" jobs, see Arlie Hochschild, 1983). As mothers, women have been traditionally conservators and transmitters of noncontroversial knowledge. Critics have cited the greater patience and the reputedly greater leniency of academic women as creating an over-dependence by students on their female teachers, what they refer to as "academic momism" (Bernard:131). Cora Dubois (1961:24) responded to this accusation by pointing out that it is precisely the feminine contribution (i.e., emotional support) which the university system rejects. There is not only an absence of a nurturing aspect in the format of the university, but a positive rejection of such an attitude in favor of a tough-minded approach to learning. A latent function of discrimination against women is, in fact, to keep learning tough.

Academic women, then, have traditionally performed some of the hardest work that has to be done by academic institutions, the grinding drudgery of unchallenging introductory courses (what Bernard refers to as their "fringe benefit" status at the university) and have thus released academic men for the more rewarding assignments, graduate courses in new, exciting areas, in the scholar role. Role theory states that roles are reciprocal, that their performance involves a mutual response: roles cannot be performed in isolation. No matter how well one performs her role, if the other person does not respond, the role is not, in effect, being performed at all. Thus, the question arises: quite apart from their intellectual qualifications, whether women, no matter how well trained they are, or how skillful, actually do for students as teachers what men can do?

Clearly the answer to such a question lies in the nature of what it is that teachers are supposed to do for their students and the academic community. If the task is the perpetuation of sexist (as well as racist, and class-based) attitudes, the reproduction of the sexual division of labor in academia (as well as elsewhere), or the domination of the masculine (i.e., scientific, objective, value-neutral) paradigm, then obviously most men (and no doubt, some women) could do more for students. However, if the service to be rendered to students involves social criticism, the creation of a "true meritocracy" in academia (and the general workforce), and the legitimation of the feminist (i.e., eliminating all false dualisms) paradigm, then hopefully most women (and some men) will be at the forefront of this teaching/learning experience. Thus, for many women T.A.s this professional dilemma will only be a red herring for the real choices to be made in their academic careers; namely, how to feminize (without ghettoization) their disciplines and academia in general, and how to end the devaluation of teaching and the traditionally-defined "feminine" subjects.

Gail S. Livings
TA Consultant
Department of Sociology

Myths About Sexual Harassment

Myth: Sexual harassment only affects a few women.

Fact: Several surveys have documented the widespread nature of sexual harassment. In one study, 88% of the respondents said they had experienced one or more forms of unwanted sexual advances on the job.

Myth: Sexual harassment is rare on the campus.

Fact: Women have only recently begun to talk about the long hidden problem of sexual harassment of students, staff, and faculty. Fear of ridicule, a sense of hopelessness about the problem and a feeling that it's a "personal" dilemma have kept the problem concealed.

Myth: Women should ignore sexual harassment when it occurs.

Fact: In one survey, 33% of those reporting sexual harassment tried to ignore the unwanted attentions. In 75% of these, the harassment continued or became worse. One quarter of the women who ignored the sexual propositions received

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unwarranted reprimands from their bosses or had their workloads increased.

Myth: If a woman really wants to discourage unwanted sexual attention, she can do so. If she's sexually harassed, she must have asked for it.

Fact: Many men believe a woman's "no" is really "yes," and therefore do not accept her refusal. Additionally, when a man is in a position of power, such as employer or teacher, the woman may be coerced or feel forced to submit.

Myth: Most charges of sexual harassment are false. Women use these charges as a way of "getting back" at a man with whom they are angry.

Fact: Women who openly charge harassment are often not believed, may be ridiculed, may lose their job, be given a bad grade or be mistreated in some other way. Women have little to gain from false charges.

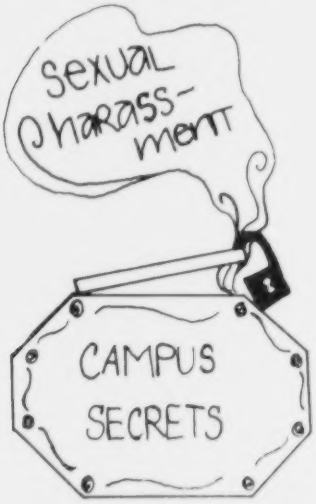
Myth: Sexual harassment is not harassment at all. It is a purely personal matter between men and women. It's a fact of life.

Fact: When a woman is coerced by a professor or her employer, she is not always in a position to readily reject such overtures, or if she does, she may face adverse reactions. Several courts have ruled that sexual harassment on the job constitutes sex discrimination under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, and in some instances have awarded damages to women. Whether sexual harassment against students constitutes sex discrimination under Title IX of the Education Amendments is now under litigation. Regardless of the legal outcome, students face a chilling climate for learning if sexual harassment is permitted or indirectly condoned.

The UCLA Sexual Harassment Survey

During May and June of 1984, a survey of sexual harassment was conducted at UCLA. A randomly selected sample of faculty, staff, and student men and women received a 14-page survey designed to determine details about sexual harassment on campus.

The survey was conducted over the last year by a joint committee of the Chancellor's Advisory Committee on the Status of Women, and the Association of Academic Women. The survey was funded by the university administration.



The official University of California definition of sexual harassment was included in the survey, and respondents were requested to use this definition when answering questions (see "University Policy" for the current working definition of sexual harassment).

Procedure: The UCLA Sexual Harassment Survey was sent to 4,842 men and women of the UCLA community. The three groups surveyed were faculty, staff and students.

Response: Overall response rate was 31%, or 1,474 respondents.

Questions: The survey questions were divided into three basic parts:

1. A series of questions assessing respondents' perceptions of harassment, knowledge of particular incidents, and awareness of campus procedures and policies on harassment.

2. Questions requesting details on incidents from victims of harassment.

3. An open-ended question which allowed respondents to offer broad comments about sexual harassment in general and UCLA in particular.

Harassment experience: Personally experiencing sexual harassment was reported by 19% of respondents.

Incidents: Sexual harassment incidents were reported by both men and women in all segments of the survey population. A majority of harassment was cross-sex, although a few incidents of same-sex harassment were reported.

Perception and severity: When asked if sexual harassment was "much of a problem" at UCLA, women rated it higher than men in all three groups surveyed. Women also considered sexual harassment to be more "personally detrimental" than did the men surveyed.

Types of harassment: Incidents reported as sexual harassment ranged widely. These incidents included sexist jokes, suggestive comments, unwanted touching, suggestive phone calls, and attempted sexual relations.

Victims by group: Based on the response to the survey, it is projected that the following

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percentages of groups on campus have experienced sexual harassment:

Male faculty	3%
Female faculty	11%
Male staff	2%
Female staff	7%
Male students	2%
Female students	7%

Consequences for victims: Just as there was a range of types of sexual harassment reported, there was a wide range of consequences for those who reported having been harassed.

Consequences were generally emotional (strained work environments, avoiding the harasser), but in some cases more active reprisal did occur; respondents reported that in a few cases, refusing the harasser was perceived to have effects on conditions of instruction or employment, or response to harassment was used as the basis for evaluative decisions.

Harassers: The status of the harasser varies somewhat by respondent group. Faculty members were the group most reported as harassers across all three respndent groups; in reported incidents, 58% of harassment involved a male faculty member.

Responses to harassment: A majority of the cases were perceived as sexual harassment at the time they occurred. Almost all victims reported making some attempt — direct or indirect — to indicate to the harasser that the attention was unwanted. A majority of the cases were reported to have persisted anyway.

Victims' response to harassment include: verbal or nonverbal rejection or a request to stop, avoidance, and formal complaints. However, formal channels of reporting were rarely used.

Awareness of UCLA policy and procedure: Responding to a question about wheher or not UCLA can do anything to deal with sexual harassment, 24% reported that to date UCLA has done "very well," 62% said "somewhat well," and 14% said "not at all well."

There were gender and group differences in response to this question. The greatest discrepancy was between male and female faculty members. On the question of how UCLA has done to date in dealing with sexual harassment, 39% of male faculty responding said UCLA has dealt "very well" with sexual harassment; 11% of female faculty responded "very well" to this question.

UCLA's role: Sixty-two percent of the respondents said that UCLA can do "very much" to combat sexual harassment, 37% said UCLA can do "a little," and 1% said UCLA can do "nothing."

Again, there were gender and group differences. On the question of how much UCLA can do, lower percentages of the male groups responded "very much" than did female groups.

Open-ended responses: Seventy-one percent of those responding to the open-ended question remarked that sexual harassment was a problem at UCLA.

Current UCLA policy: More than two-thirds of the respondents identified current UCLA policy as "very important." This policy includes:
1. Available channels to report sexual harrasment.
2. Effective procedures for dealing with complaints.
3. Enforcement of penalties for harassers.
4. Keeping a record of formal complaints.
5. Specific policies which prohibit sexual harassment.
6. Adding legitimate complaints to a harasser's permanent record.

New policy: More than two-thirds of respondents considered two additional policies to be "very important" or "somewhat important" that are not now part of UCLA policy:
1. Keeping a record of informal sexual harassment complaints.
2. Publicizing penalties given to harassers.

Where to go for additional information:

1. Office of the Ombudsman
   274 Kinsey Hall
   825-7627
2. Women's Resource Center
   2 Dodd Hall
   825-3945
3. Office of the Dean of Students
   2224 Murphy Hall
   825-3871

ALL INQUIRIES ARE CONFIDENTIAL

"I have yet to hear a professor comment on the daily appearance of a male colleague. I have yet to go through a week without some comment pertaining to my appearance."

Anonymous

"I could write a book but much of what I have said is still very painful to me. I would hope that the study you are doing will shed some light on these very difficult problems because I am convinced that women are being shortchanged by our higher educational institutions..."

Anonymous

University Policy on Sexual Harassment

The University of California is committed to creating and maintaining a community in which students, faculty, administrative and academic staff can work together in an atmosphere free of all forms of harassment, exploitation, or intimidation—including sexual. Specifically, every member of the University community should be aware that the University is strongly opposed to sexual harassment and that such behavior is prohibited both by law and by University policy. It is the intention of the University to take whatever action may be needed to prevent, correct and, if necessary, discipline behavior which violates this Policy.

Sexual harassment, for purposes of this Policy, is defined as follows:

Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

1. Submission to or rejection of such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of instruction, employment or participation in other University activity;

2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for evaluation in making academic or personnel decisions affecting an individual; or

3. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive University environment.

In determining whether the alleged conduct constitutes sexual harassment, consideration should be given to the record as a whole and to the totality of the circumstances, including the nature of the sexual advances and the context in which the alleged incidents occurred.

UCLA Procedures for Implementing the Policy

Formal Procedures

Following is a listing of the formal procedures for consideration of complaints of sexual harassment. Copies of the various procedures may be obtained from departmental offices, the Ombudsman's Office, and the Campus Counsel's office (2241 Murphy Hall, Extension 54042) as well as from other offices specifically indicated. Grievance procedures—i.e., procedures to request appropriate remedial action--are listed first (categorized with regard to whether a complainant is a student, a staff appointee, a member of the Academic Senate, or a non-Senate academic appointee), followed by procedures for consideration of imposition of disciplinary sanctions for violation of the University Policy.

Grievance Procedures

Where the complainant is a student: If the alleged offender is a faculty member (e.g., allegation of sexual harassment in the context of grading or other evaluation of academic work), the complainant may go to the Academic Senate Office (3125 Murphy Hall, Extension 53851) and ask to file a complaint under "Campus Procedures for Implementation of University Policy on Faculty Conduct and the Administration of Discipline."

If the alleged offender is any person other than a faculty member, the complainant may go to the Dean of Students' Office (2224 Murphy Hall, Extension 53871) and file a complaint under the "Student Grievance Procedure Regarding Violation of Anti-Discrimination Laws or University Policies on Sex, Ethnic, or Handicap Discrimination" (UCLA Standard Procedures, No. 230.1).

Where the complainant is a staff appointee: The complainant may file a complaint under UCLA Staff Personnel Procedure, Section 280, which is the employee grievance procedure under University Staff Personnel Policy. Information may be obtained by phoning a Personnel Consultant, Extension 50661 (general campus) or 50644 (Medical Center).

Where the complainant is a member of the Academic Senate: The complainant may bring the matter to the attention of the Academic Senate Committee on Privilege and Tenure, under Senate By-Law 113 (information is available in the Academic Senate Office, 3125 Murphy Hall, Extension 53851).

Where the complainant is a non-Senate academic appointee (including apprentice academic appointees, e.g., teaching assistants): The complainant may go to the Campus Counsel's Office (2241 Murphy Hall, Extension 54042) for assistance in filing a complaint under Section 140 of the Academic Personnel Manual.

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If the complainant wishes to initiate procedures which can lead to imposition of disciplinary sanction on

A staff appointee: Bring the matter to the attention of the alleged offender's supervisor for consideration of corrective action under University Staff Personnel Policy, Section 270. For information and assistance, phone a Personnel Consultant, Extension 50661 (general campus) or 50644 (Medical Center).

An academic appointee (e.g., Teaching Assistant): Bring the matter to the attention of the department chair for consideration of imposition of discipline under the procedures pertaining to "Conduct and Discipline" in the UCLA Academic Apprentice Personnel Manual.

A non-Senate academic appointee not a faculty member: Bring the matter to the attention of the department chair or unit head for consideration of imposition of discipline under the "Campus Policy Applicable to Specified Academic Classifications in Cases of Termination of Appointment (and imposition of disciplinary sanctions)," contained in the UCLA Summary of Policy, Academic Personnel.

A faculty member: Bring the matter to the Academic Senate Office, 3125 Murphy Hall, for consideration of disciplinary action under "Campus Procedures for Implementation of University Policy on Faculty Conduct and the Administration of Discipline." Discipline may be imposed under the Faculty Code of Conduct after a hearing by the Academic Senate Charges Committee and the Committee on Privilege and Tenure.

A student: Bring the matter to the attention of the Dean of Students, (2224 Murphy Hall, Extension 53871) for consideration of imposition of a sanction under "The UCLA Student Conduct Code of Procedures."

Informal Procedures

Widespread experience has demonstrated that many complaints of sexual harassment can be effectively resolved through informal intervention. Individuals who experience what they consider to be sexual harassment are advised to so inform the alleged offender immediately and firmly. A complainant who chooses not to confront the offender and who wishes help, advice, or counseling should contact the staff of the Ombudsman's Office (Don Hartsock or Ola Ross), 274 Kinsey Hall, Extension 57627. The Ombudsman's Office will maintain confidentiality, without the filing of a formal complaint; with the permission of the complainant, the Ombudsman will make an effort to change offending behavior and prevent retaliatory action by speaking informally with the alleged offender and, if desirable, with the alleged offender's supervisor or department chair. The Ombudsman's Office may also be of help in informing the complainant about other campus agencies which might provide assistance. Finally, the Ombudsman's Office can inform the complainant on ways to initiate formal grievance procedures.

Alternatively, a complainant may discuss the matter initially with the alleged offender's supervisor or department chair. Complainants are not, in any case, required to participate in informal consulting before filing a formal complaint.

Credits

Our thanks to Jeanne Giovannoni, Assistant to the Vice Chancellor for Faculty Relations, for directing us to much of the material found in this newsletter. Similarly, Tina Oakland and Mary Desjardins from the Women's Resource Center prepared and provided materials. We would also like to thank Gail Livings, the TA Consultant from Sociology, for preparing the article on Women TAs. The article entitled "Writing a Letter to the Sexual Harasser" by Bernice R. Sandler was first published by the Project on the Status and Education of Women of the Association of American Colleges in February of 1983.

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the TA at UCLA NEWSLETTER

FALL 1986 ISSUE #18

The Evaluation of College Teaching

The Nature of Teaching

Before evaluating teaching, one must develop a clear conception of what is to be evaluated. For purposes of evaluation, teaching can be defined as "helping someone else learn something."

To advance this definition one step further, good teaching can be considered "being effective in the process of helping someone else learn something significant." The two added elements of effectiveness and significance both seem necessary to warrant the label of "good teaching."

The act of teaching can also be viewed as an interactive process that involves a teacher and students. This interaction occurs within a context or environment that can influence the success of that interaction.

This definition of good teaching and the interactive character of teaching have a number of implications for evaluation.

1. For purposes of evaluation, **the primary purpose of teaching is to generate as much significant learning as possible.** Students and teachers may bring additional purposes to the classroom, but for purposes of evaluation, the main concern is the amount of significant learning generated.

2. **The teacher is an important but indirect factor in the process of learning.** This is simply a recognition of the fact that it is the student who does the learning; the teacher's role is to help the student in whatever ways possible.

3. In higher education, **the teacher has primary responsibility for key decisions about a course.** These decisions include such things as determining the scope of a course, identifying the educational goals, selecting reading materials, constructing tests, and assigning grades.

4. **The quality of teachers' classroom behavior also has a major effect on students' reaction to the course on a day-to-day basis.** This refers to such characteristics of teachers as the clarity of their explanations, the enthusiasm they show for the subject, the rapport they develop with students, and the degree to which they are organized and prepared for class on a regular basis.

5. **Teaching takes place within several kinds of contexts**, all of which can have a significant influence on the quality of the teaching and the learning. Examples include the following:

- **Physical**--the characteristics of a classroom and the time at which a course is scheduled.
- **Social**--the relationship between the teacher and the students is an interactive one. Students can inspire or discourage the teacher and vice versa.
- **Institutional**--the attitude and actions of the department and the larger institution. Do their attitudes and actions encourage or discourage good teaching?
- **Personal**--The situation of the teacher's non-professional life. Has there been an illness, divorce, or financial problems?

In summary, teaching can be viewed as an interactive process that takes place within several types of contexts for the purpose of generating as much significant learning as possible.

in this issue:

SELF ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

The Nature of Evaluation

The type of evaluation appropriate for use in higher education is four-dimensional. It calls for an examination of the input, the process, the product, and the context of an event or action. When this general framework is applied to the specific situation of college courses it results in five items: (1) knowledge of subject matter; (2) course decisions; (3) classroom behavior; (4) student learning; and (5) context.

The first dimension of teaching evaluation is the teacher's input, his or her **knowledge of the subject matter.** A teacher who is up-to-date in his or her field and has undertaken the required research and preparation for a class provides the input necessary for significant learning. It follows that the breakdown of this input component diminishes the learning processes.

The second dimension of evaluation, the "process," involves two separate activities in college teaching: **course decisions** and **classroom behavior**. When a professor teaches a course, he or she makes decisions about the scope of the subject matter to be covered, the teaching strategy to be used, the grading system, course policies, etc. In these activities, teachers need to give consideration to a variety of factors (the nature of the curriculum, the characteristics of the students, etc.) and design the course accordingly. Also part of the "process" of teaching, but quite different in nature, is what a professor does in the classroom. Once the basic course decisions have been made and the professor steps into the classroom, he or she must engage all available communication and interaction skills to deliver lectures, lead discussions, ask questions, motivate students, and generate interest.

The third dimension is concerned with the "product." In college teaching, this is **amount and type of learning** that occurs in a given course.

The fourth dimension is **context.** In college teaching, there are several types of contexts that affect the quality of a given case of teaching: physical (e.g., the characteristics of the classroom), social (the nature of the students), institutional (the support given to teaching), and personal (other events in the life of the teacher).

What then are the questions that have to be answered in order to make confident and valid judgments about the quality of teaching? The five general questions and related sub-points shown below seem applicable to all classroom teaching in a university setting. The manner in which answers are found to these questions will vary from department to department and from college to college, but the questions themselves are inherent in the nature of teaching and in the nature of evaluation.

How well did the teacher's classroom behavior promote good learning?
- Organization and clarity
- Enthusiasm
- Interaction with the class as a whole
- Relationships with individual students

Does the teacher have adequate and up-to-date knowledge of the subject matter?
- Academic and/or practical experience
- Efforts to improve

How good were the teacher's decisions about the course?
- Goals
- Teaching strategy
- Reading/laboratory homework assignments
- Testing
- Course grading

How good were the educational results of the course?
- Amount of learning
- Significance of what was learned
- Attitude towards learning more about the subject

How much was the quality of the teaching and learning influenced by contextual factors?
- Physical context
- Social context
- Institutional context
- Personal context

Dee Fink
University of Oklahoma

Generalizations About the Reliability of Student Ratings

1. Student agreement on global ratings is sufficiently high if the class has over fifteen students.

2. Students are consistent in their global ratings of the same instructor at different times in the course.

3. An instructor's overall teaching performance in a course can be generalized from ratings from five or more classes taught by the instructor in which at least fifteen students were enrolled in each class.

4. The same instructor teaching different sections of the same course receives similar global ratings from each section.

Generalizations about the Quality of Student-Written Appraisals

1. Student written comments to open-ended questions are diverse and include comments about both the instructor and the course.

2. Students tend to focus their comments on instructor characteristics (enthusiasm, rapport) and what they learned rather than on the organization and structure of the course.

3. Students give few detailed suggestions about how to improve a course. They are better critics than course designers.

4. Faculty regard student written comments as less credible than student responses to global items when the information is for personnel decisions. Faculty regard written comments as more credible when the purpose was self-improvement.

5. Global overall ratings of the instructor and course based on student responses to scaled items, written comments, and student interviews are similar. Thus, the method of collecting information does not influence student evaluations of the overall teaching competence of an instructor or the quality of the course.

Interpreting Your Course Evaluations

Student responses to the formal questionnaires completed at the end of the quarter are statistically summarized and returned to the departments and individual instructors. Responses to each item are averaged, and the variability of student responses is summarized as a standard deviation from the mean. The following points should be kept in mind when interpreting the results:

1. Were reasonable procedures (such as suggested in the preceding section) used to collect the ratings?

2. How many students in the class completed the questionnaires? Responses from less than 2/3 of the class should be viewed with caution.

3. The average ratings can be interpreted according to the absolute scale given to the students, or relative to the ratings of other courses and professors. For example, a mean rating of 6.5 on a 9 point scale for overall course evaluation may be labeled as between "O.K." and "good" on the scale given to students. Taking them at their word, students rated the course as adequate. However, it may be that 70 percent of similar courses are rated above 6.5. Thus, relative to other courses, the 6.5 rating was in the lower third. Which interpretation is correct? The answer is that both interpretations are useful. The course was judged O.K., but students were not particularly excited by it.

In interpreting ratings relative to other courses, all-university or departmental averages which combine graduate and undergraduate, small and large classes, lecture and discussion courses are probably not very useful. All of these variables have been shown to affect course ratings.

4. The variability of student responses is important diagnostic information. For example, consider an average course rating of 7 on a 9 point scale with a small standard deviation, say of 1.0 or so. This means that most students rated the course as 6, 7, or 8. On the other hand, the same average rating with a larger standard deviation, say 3.4, indicates a greater range of ratings which may indicate problems with the course. It is sometimes important to look at the total distribution of ratings. For example, there are sometimes bimodal distributions of ratings, in which a large group of students really liked the course, and another large group of students disliked it. This could indicate two different ability or

interest groups in the class.

5. Finally, we repeat again that although student response to a course is important for evaluation and teaching improvement, it should not be used as the only measure of teaching. Student ratings are affected by course content, amount of work, expected grades, class size, and students' own needs and attitudes. Not all of these variables which affect student ratings may be important for what the faculty defines as effective instruction.

Midterm Evaluation Form

MIDTERM EVALUATION FORM

Midterm evaluations are designed to help teaching assistants improve their performance while there is still time to implement improvements before the end of the quarter. The following are suggested questions for TAs who teach discussion sections, laboratory sections, or studios. You might want to photocopy this page and have your students complete the relevant sections during the fifth or sixth week of instruction.

The numerical scale ranges from 1 (much below avg./poor) to 7 (much above avg./excellent). Some questions may not be applicable (NA) to a particular section.

Discussion Sections

1. Well prepared for the section or lab.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 NA

2. Responsive to students' questions.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 NA

3. Uses class time effectively.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 NA

4. Presents material clearly.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 NA

5. Provides helpful comments on homework assignments, papers, reports, or exams.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 NA

6. Knowledgeable about the subject matter.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 NA

7. Effectively directs and stimulates discussion.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 NA

8. Raises challenging questions or problems for discussion.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 NA

9. Imparts enthusiasm for the subject matter.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 NA

10. Adjusts the pace of the section to the students' level of understanding.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 NA

11. Is concerned that students learn from the material.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 NA

12. Renders complex or difficult material from lecture or readings more understandable.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 NA

13. Available for help outside of class.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 NA

14. Value of the TA's hand-outs (if applicable).
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 NA

15. Consistency and fairness of grading.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 NA

16. The TA's overall performance.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 NA

Laboratory Sections

1. Renders difficult instructions in the lab manual clear and easy to follow.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 NA

2. Relates experiments performed in the lab to real world research.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 NA

3. Knowledgeable about lab theory and procedure.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 NA

4. Helpful in interpreting student's incorrect or inconsistent lab results.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 NA

5. Provides helpful comments on lab technique before and during the experiment.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 NA

6. Proportion of the time spent lecturing on lab material.
too little__ just right__
too much__

Studio Sections

1. Provided a diversity of materials, techniques, and content.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 NA

2. The projects were extremely valuable in understanding the course.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 NA

3. Assigned projects were appropriate to the level of the course.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 NA

4. Instructor's examples and demonstrations were clear and concise.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 NA

5. Instructor explained each step carefully when discussing processes and techniques.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 NA

6. Instructor explained the underlying rationale for techniques or styles.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 NA

Peer Observation

Peerless Evaluation

Most evaluations of TAs are literally "peerless," since the people who observe TAs teaching are frequently faculty advisors or departmental administrators. Even the TAC, who does not write evaluations, seldom participates in true peer evaluation. Although the TAC observes the TAs, often the TAs do not have the opportunity to observe the TAC's teaching in return. This makes the consultant a temporarily unequal equal, and a real peer exchange hard to find. Yet there are good reasons why peer evaluation of teaching ought to become common practice.

Why Bother?

TAs have much to gain from observing each other's teaching. TAs can profitably share techniques, successes, and problems. Each peer observer can expand his or her own file of teaching ideas and materials while he or she helps a friend polish classroom demeanor. The results can include a net savings of the TAs' time and a richer, more coherent teaching program. Handled with a little care, the whole process can be as close to nonthreatening as any observation ever will be.

Minimizing Bother, Maximizing Benefits

A peer observation program can easily be set up through a 495 seminar, and can even become an integral part of the seminar. Failing that, TA Consultants are usually in a good position to initiate and coordinate such programs. Or, interested TAs can simply agree on their own to work out a convenient schedule and informal protocol. At base, all that's needed are two TAs willing to spend a couple of hours improving their teaching skills.

A peer observation program need not require major commitments from anyone, but it is important that the minor commitments involved be met. This just boils down to watching carefully and responding sensitively while wearing the observer's hat, then faithfully taking one's turn as the observed.

Making a peer observation program work well involves a little planning and diplomacy as well. Here are some suggestions which may help smooth out the pedagogical exchange and ensure that it's profitable.

- Set the date in advance. Some people don't dote on surprise visitors. On the other hand, many unannounced observers have wound up twiddling their thumbs for twenty minutes while students take a quiz. Give the other TA a choice of dates, so that you can be sure of seeing him or her at his or her best, or at least, most typical. It's usually advisable to arrange for him or her to visit your classroom within a week or two of your visit to his or her's.

- Agree between yourselves whether the observer is to remain quietly anonymous during class, explain his or her presence to the students, or participate fully in class activities. Each approach has its advantages and disadvantages, but it is well for both TAs to decide what sounds most comfortable.

- Keep the date, and arrive early (dramatic late entrances tend to disrupt class). If possible, chat with the other TA briefly before class to set him or her at ease and to ascertain his or her objectives for the class hour.

- Decide whether the notes you'll take will be written or mental. I prefer to write copious notes while I'm observing someone else's teaching, but this makes some teachers nervous. Be that as it may, if much time will elapse between the classroom visit and the discussion it engenders, be sure to jot down your comments immediately after the class, if not during.

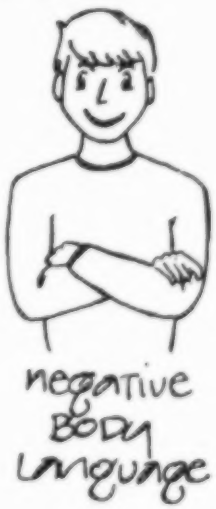
- If you can't discuss the class at length with the other TA after the class is over, at least talk together for a couple of minutes before parting. Briefly mentioning the aspect of the class you liked most and throwing in a little praise goes a long way toward alleviating observation anxiety.

What to Observe and How to Give Peedback

What do you look/hope for in your own teaching? After many years of college, you have had experience with good and bad teachers. Look for familiar flaws, as well as the finer points of teaching. Do watch the students as well as the teacher, though; students' responses, or lack thereof, speak volumes.

Some useful peer evaluation checklists follow. Whether or not the checklists mention anything you would not have noted on your own, they definitely can help make your observation more systematic and your feedback more coherent.

- The two of you can meet after each visitation, or you can wait until after you've observed each other and trade notes in one session. Either way, honesty, clarity, specificity, and tact pay off.
- Before you confer with each other, take a few minutes individually to review your notes and organize your comments. It's important to be specific. A comment like, "You should encourage student participation" may not be useful unless you can suggest when more participation would have been valuable and are willing to discuss what might have been done to elicit it. It's usually easy to organize specific observation under general headings such as organization, clarifying objectives, and student rapport.
- Deliver your comments in a non-threatening fashion. After all, you're out to help each other, not to pass judgment.
- Set the other person at ease first. Talk about general aspects of his or her teaching which impressed you favorably, verbally reaffirm the collaborative nature of this present undertaking -- whatever it takes to establish a supportive atmosphere.
- Begin the serious discussion of the other person's class with constructive criticism, end with praise. Studies show that it is better to give "negative" feedback first, then positive (contrary to popular myth).



- Phrase constructive feedback tactfully, putting it in second or third person (avoid, "I didn't like...") and emphasizing alternatives (i.e. never, "I thought you screwed up on X," but rather, "How would your students have responded if you had done Y instead?).

As you switch to positive feedback and encouragement, switch to first person so that your comments become personal validations (i.e. "I was very impressed by the way you handled Z.").

- Give the other person equal time. Peer observation entails an exchange of ideas and responses. The more equal the exchange, the better.
- Confidentiality is crucial. What you see in the other person's classroom, what you say in conference should never circulate beyond the two of you without the other person's express permission.

Other Forms of Peer Observation

Videotaping: Arrange through the TA Consultant to have your class and the class or classes of one of your peers videotaped. Schedule a private film festival during which you watch and comment on each other's tapes. Videotape allows you to observe your class at the same time the others do and it helps you to make your comments on others' teaching clear and specific.

Group Visitation: This works the same way as binary visitation except that a number of your peers visit your classroom together and then give you a group response. Each member of the group hosts the other members in turn. Some advantages of group visitations are diversity and camaraderie, while the disadvantage is some loss of intimacy.

Whether done in pairs or in groups, with or without technological aid, peer observation can be one of the most profitable and enjoyable ways to polish your teaching skills. A relatively small time commitment can reward you and the other TAs in your department with improved teaching evaluations.

Peer Observation Form

Physical Appearance: Note any distractions or problems. Does the teacher vary his or her other physical activities?

Clarity (of voice): Does the teacher speak clearly and distinctly?

Goals: How are the goals of the class determined? Who selects them? Are they clear to everyone? Are they appropriate?

Rapport: Does the teacher understand the students' remarks? Is there mutual respect between the students and the teacher? Do the students feel comfortable participating?

Student Participation: Are the students alert? Are they involved? In what way?

Level of Interaction: On what cognitive level is the class taking place? Knowledge, interpretation, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, evaluation? Is the level appropriate for the goals of the class?

Interaction Patterns: What interaction patterns are prevalent? Who initiates them? Are the patterns appropriate for the goals of the class?

Clarity of Explanations: Are the teacher's explanations, instructions, etc., clear? Is an appropriate vocabulary used?

Questions: At what cognitive level? How complex? Are they clear? Is the wait time appropriate? Are they appropriate for the goals of the class? What is the progression in a series of questions?

Analyzing a Videotape

Climate

Play the tape through once, noting those of your behaviors which set the "climate" of the classroom. What behaviors of the students indicate how they feel about interacting with the material, with you and with each others' ideas?

- Do they look away when you ask questions?
- Do they take notes furiously when you ask questions?
- When responding to a question, do they speak softly or murmur?
- Do you accord them silence for think-time both after a question is asked and after an answer is suggested?
- Do you encourage/discourage a superordinate-subordinate hierarchy between you and the class? Physically? Verbally?
- Do you use and refer to their ideas?
- Which of your comments build up your own ego at the expense of the students' comments? Examples: "Obviously, such-and-such is true." "You all see this, don't you?" "The best way to do this problem is this way."

- Is there a "moat" of empty seats between you and the class?

In what ways can you help to make the climate of this classroom more comfortable for interaction?

- Do you acknowledge and value the students' contributions?

Questioning

Choose a representative 10-minute segment of the videotape and write out all the questions you asked during this time.

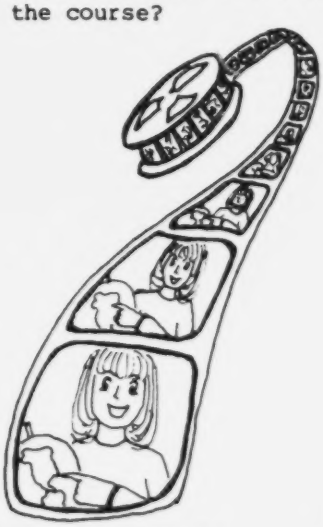
- Note your "Wait-time" (that period of time after a question is posed before you answer it yourself, rephrase it, add to it or call on someone to respond). If this is a period shorter than 4-5 seconds, you are not allowing your students the modest amount of time needed to think about the question and to formulate a response.
- To analyze your questioning pattern, answer the following:

1. Where do you move from information-level questions to those requiring higher levels of thought: those of analysis, synthesis, evaluation, application?
2. Note the types of your questions; ask yourself, how does this pattern hamper or facilitate the students' thinking?
3. How could you have handled this differently? With what results?

Responding

Using the same segment of your videotape, note your responses to your students' answers.

- How are you encouraging and extending their mental and verbal processing?
- Where do you think that your rapid reward of a correct answer prematurely terminated the others' thinking?
- How and where might you have responded differently?
- What ways can you think of to encourage more interaction on the part of the students with the ideas of the course?



Concepts

Write down the name of each concept you mention in this segment of tape.

- What must the students know in order to understand and use each of these concepts?
- What evidence do you have that they, in fact, do possess this knowledge?
- How might you determine this?

Facilitating Learning: A Summary

What is the goal of this lesson? Where/when do you state it to the class? How do you attempt to show or ascertain its relevance to their interests, needs, lives? Is there a summation at the end of the lesson? What will this accomplish?

Look at your students' posture, facial expressions, behaviors. What messages are they conveying to you? What will you do with this information?

Learning requires an investment from the learner: that he or she have the situation of EXPERIENCE. The teacher cannot "learn" someone something. Where, on this tape, have you given the responsibility for learning to the students?

Note your tone of voice. Is it monotonous? How do you convey an enthusiasm for your subject? How could you have done so?

How and where do you model systematic, methodological, thinking behavior for the class? (WHAT they learn is not as important, in the long run, as HOW they learn- and you can be the model.)

Which of your behaviors do you believe are successful in facilitating your students' learning? Write them down. How will you incorporate them into future lessons?

Which of your behaviors are counter-productive? What do you plan to do with this knowledge? Be specific.

Further Questions?

If you want to know more, please call the TA Training Program at 825-9269.

Credits

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An Essay on Foreign Teaching Assistants and U.S. Students

Sometimes, as with Isaac Newton and the apple, it pays to take a closer look at what so many consider the obvious and especially at what is obvious about ourselves. The attempt here is to juxtapose universals of culture and specific American cultural traits in order to provide insight into the behavior of our young people, especially in the classroom setting, and to show teachers, administrators, and TA trainers why some of this conduct may be problematic to the uninitiated foreign teaching assistant.

This article is intended to describe the relationship of education to society as well as the participants' roles in the education process. The title is derived from Sol Tax's definition of anthropology as "an association of people who have agreed to continue in communication with each other." By definition, at least for the duration of their professional relationship to one another, U.S. students and foreign teaching assistants must agree to communicate.

In a continuing commitment to international education, U.S. universities have paid increasing attention to the roles and varying performances of the foreign TAs they employ. These men and women, because of their impressive academic backgrounds at home, have been selected by graduate committees to instruct American undergraduates in fields ranging from linguistics to watershed management. One of the more positive aspects of these appointments is that the foreign TA often presents a different view and interpretation of the course material, and takes an approach to the subject that U.S. academicians may not have considered. And, in the long run, such a professional arrangement provides the opportunity for international cross-communication among future political, scientific, and academic leaders.

Some specific notable negative aspects have also surfaced. First, variation in the use of English among foreign TAs interferes with student comprehension. Problems such as a foreign accent and non-native syntax are confusing to American students. Second, a lack of understanding by the foreign TA of the diversified U.S. education system or an unclear picture of the "anthropology" of the U.S. university classroom prevents effective teaching and learning. And finally, a conflict of educational values between cultures often emerges.

The foreign TA, like any foreign student coming to study at an American university, must undergo a process of acculturation in order to be effective in the U.S. classroom. In other words, he or she must, to an as yet undetermined degree, "become more like us" in order to function.

The most obvious manifestation of the acculturation process is learning the target language. Cautious linguists question a remark such as "Jane is fluent in five languages." To be truly fluent in a language, in addition to mastering the phonology, morphology, syntax and even the semiology of that language, Jane must become aware of its other aspects, such as the variations of idiolect--the language behavior of an individual speaker--a task that causes agonies of misunderstanding, even among the native speaker. She must be aware of social stratification within certain language groups, as well as appropriate levels of formality to suit the event or topic.

Much of the data on foreign TAs and their students indicate that both groups place great emphasis on the language problem, especially pronunciation, without putting it in the totality of culture; however, many a non-native speaker who "massacres" English is still able to get his message across with just the proper amount of candor, humor, or poignancy, because he has mastered other characteristics of the language and culture such as timing and jargon. Perhaps most important, the listeners sense the acculturated non-native speaker's insight into their view of the world and their place in it.

When the foreign TA is introduced to the important concept of culture and the need to examine

in this issue:

SUGGESTIONS FOR FOREIGN TEACHING ASSISTANTS

it, he or she finds that education, formal and informal, is part of every culture. The task lies in identifying prominent universals.

At this point, we should develop a working definition of culture. There are many such definitions, a few hundred in fact. E.B. Tylor's, for example, might effectively describe the range of variables a foreigner in a new culture must confront:

> Culture is that...complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.

Another definition that is especially suitable for foreign TAs attempting to get along with their American students is Keesing's statement that "culture is the totality of learned, socially transmitted behavior."

With either of these definitions in mind, the foreign TA should consider the necessity for a switching of cultural roles along with the switching of languages for successful teaching in a foreign university. The ability to assume a culturally alien persona is an important part of what we mean by capacity for language or overall communicative competence. Like an actor the foreign TA must assume the role of teacher.

One characteristic of education is its relationship to the social power base. The dominant group in a culture organizes the system of education to maintain and strengthen its own position. Of course, this power structure has been challenged many times, as in the 1960s when the students, the educated elite, rebelled against "the system" in several countries. A second characteristic of education is that all cultures use rewards and punishments to encourage learning and to correct aberrant behavior. The United States, throughout its educational history, has been extreme in its use of one or both of these devices at one time or another. But the subtle types of rewards and punishment used by adults or near-adults in unequal power discourse situations, such as the college classroom, may differ widely from culture to culture. Foreign TAs need to be aware that American students may expect praise for correct answers and resent negative feedback that seems to them too strong.

A third notable characteristic is that in all societies, educators of every nationality, intentionally or unintentionally, withhold crucial knowledge from children, young people, and the uninitiated adult learner. Foreign TAs should know that, in this society, such information may include facts about sex or transgressions of historical figures.

Finally, and probably the greatest problem in education in every country, is the challenge of dealing and cooperating intelligently with the inevitable sociocultural changes taking place. Educators continue to argue about whether or not we can or should actually use education to influence or control these changes. In the United States, our educators are expected to be seekers and explorers of knowledge, leaders in formulating the values and ideals of our society and in working for its continual improvement. An important cross-cultural question will be whether or not the foreign TA, on becoming a participant in the process of American higher education, can assume this role.

As for differences among cultures, these are too numerous for listing. American culture, for example, is much less integrated than, say, that of the Soviet Union, where the needs of farming and industry are an integral part of the educational foci. We can compare the blurred lines between childrearing at home and educating at school that exist in the United States to the strict compartmentalization of education in France and Germany. Because of the clear division of their responsibilities, there is little need for communication between parents and teachers or social leaders and teachers in those two European countries.

In the U.S., on the other hand, a trend of cooperation has developed between the school and the home (e.g., the very existence of the Parent-Teacher Association), and the school and other social institutions. At the same time we must remember that more than anywhere else in the world, universities here have traditionally reflected the social pluralism of our twentieth century and have provided the means for upward social mobility.

After developing an awareness of cultural differences and universals the foreigner should become familiar with the conflicts within a given culture. Nowhere is culture-in-conflict more obvious than in the United States, where opposing values coexist to a bewildering degree in the eyes of the foreigner, especially one from a tightly structured society such as Japan, China, or even West Germany. (This same bewilderment is also faced by the native American Indian who leaves the reservation to study at a southwestern university.)

Let us focus on classroom behavior specifically to demonstrate the conflict between the expectations of teachers and the norms of behavior. It is important for the foreign TA to know that U.S. students have been told over and over to be punctual or to be quiet when the teacher is talking. Since their elementary school years, American students have been asked to raise their hands to signal that they wished to speak or answer questions. In

sports and games they learned to play fair and to take turns; they also developed a strong sense of group loyalty. There has, however, been no guarantee that the students ever absorbed these values as their own:

> ...other factors interfere, such as the special norms of the peer group, the unpopularity of certain teachers, and perhaps parental apathy toward...education.

In class, students at all grade levels often speak out without being called on or raising their hands. Jules Henry has described this permissiveness in its extremity:

> The excessive informality of...American schools stem from the teacher's deliberate refusal to establish a clear source of authority in the classroom, so that the children are often unsure where to draw the line in their behavior and whom precisely to heed, whether the teacher or one of their own number.

In college classrooms, although the lecture format is common, this tendency toward permissiveness often results in an interactive dialogue between students and professors, either during or after the professor's presentation.

American students today do differ from past generations in some ways. Their manners and mores have been shaped steadily by the experiences and fast-changing lifestyles of their parents and daily by the influences of their peer groups, among whom a noticeable characteristic is in the choice of language style. What were outrageous obscenities rarely heard in mixed company twenty years ago, are now commonly heard qualifiers, part of the informal and, more and more, of the formal speech habits of both sexes, however blunted these phrases are by overuse. Non-native speaking teaching assistants, whose English instruction in their home countries probably did not include profanity, may be puzzled or offended by their students' speech.

Most likely, the foreign TA will be surprised by much of the behavior of the freshman undergraduates he encounters in his first teaching assignment. It behooves us to attempt a further profile of the kind of student he might expect to face in the classroom. Coming from the public high schools, students are accustomed to teachers who have lost or given up a great deal of authority in the classroom. Ideally, this loss of authority has been balanced by a kind of teamwork for problem solving--a partnership between students and teacher. However, some critics of contemporary education exhort the teacher to assume once again the authoritarian role of

instructor and insist that the boundaries of social distance be re-examined. Today, in many classroom situations, students are permitted to call teachers by their first names. This practice, of course, is more common at the graduate school level, but it may be surprising to foreign TAs from relatively formal educational backgrounds. In addition, college teachers here are usually expected to be approachable both in and out of the classroom.

Experience tells us that the class master, foreign or American, must maintain a delicate balance of discipline and permissiveness. If the instructor cannot lead, the students, even those used to a higher degree of permissiveness, become confused and anarchy results. On the other hand, if the instructor is excessively autocratic, the students are likely to become resentful and attempt to frustrate him.

What happens then in the university classroom? Because there is more at stake professionally and financially, the professor does wield more power than the typical high school teacher, in that the students' academic records have a greater impact on their future careers. Not since they were read to by their parents in their preschool days do students in classrooms strive again to listen so carefully. In the lecture hall system, the social distance is wider between lecturer and students.

In summary, recognizing that students' educational backgrounds are in some ways similar but in many ways different should facilitate the foreign TAs' efforts to communicate with and understand their U.S. students. Most important, since this country has no national ministry of education, each community's school district and, in fact, each school has a style or character in some ways different from any other. Although the media have created a great deal of homogeneity nationwide, in each U.S. school setting one will find unique approaches to teaching and learning along with individual definitions of the student and teacher roles. The foreign TA must be aware of the great variety and elasticity of the American value system, thereby becoming more conscious of and sensitive to the expectations that students bring to the university classroom or lecture hall.

Frank Pialorsi
University of Arizona

"One of my best TAs didn't speak the greatest English, but he looked for the reactions in our faces when he spoke, to see if we were understanding the concepts; if not, he explained them further."
- UCLA Engineering Undergraduate

An Essay on Foreign Teaching Assistants and U.S. Students

It is true that foreign teaching assistants have more difficulties than their American counterparts, such as language barriers, and cultural differences. No doubt, every foreign TA must try very hard to overcome these problems. Yet there are not many people who realize that foreign TAs have their advantages as well, which stem from the same sources of the disadvantages, (i.e., different cultural and academic backgrounds).

Many academic branches require instructors and teaching assistants to have a broad background knowledge. This is particularly true in the social sciences and humanities. Needless to say, a native speaker would be an ideal TA for a foreign language class; a Japanese TA teaching Japanese, a Mexican TA teaching Spanish. Their advantages are obvious compared with their American counterparts who have studied perhaps three or four years of these foreign languages.

On many occasions, foreign TAs have their own advantages in studies that are closely related to their own home countries in departments such as Political Science, History, Sociology, Anthropology, Economics, and groups of area studies (Africa, Asia, Central America, and Europe).

Here I would like to refer to my own experiences. In the fall of 1984, I was a TA for a Political Science upper division class. This class concentrated on American foreign policy towards China, Japan, Korea, Vietnam, and the competition with the Soviet Union. In order to understand current American foreign policy, the professor provided his class with tremendous historical background. About half the students in this class had some knowledge about Asia. The other half were beginners. They had perhaps never heard of, for example, Dr. Sun Yat-sen, the leader of the 1911 revolution, and the founding father of the Republic of China.

As a graduate student from Beijing University, I had solid knowledge about Chinese history and I was familiar with Asian culture and history. As a Ph.D. student in Political Science, East Asian politics was one of my main fields, and I passed the qualifying examination in that field, so I was also familiar with American scholars' points of view. Thus, I felt confident being a TA for this class.

Exposing Students to Foreign Perspectives

At discussion sections, on the one hand, I organized discussions around the professors' lectures and assigned reading. On the other hand, I tried to provide different points of view from the perspective of various Asian countries.

Many students in this class were excited about the fact that they had a TA who was directly from Beijing, China. Since Sino-American relations was one of the most important aspects of American foreign policy with Asia, they were curious about what kind of comments a Chinese TA would give in many cases. Several times in discussion section, I was asked for "personal opinions." My own background enabled me to answer virtually any questions regarding Chinese politics. All these made the discussions more vivid and full of variety. Furthermore, about one-third of my office hour visitors were those who wanted to have a "chat" with me on various issues that may have not been directly related to the class. For example, the topic may have been the birth control policy in China, or the feelings of South Koreans towards China. By the end of the semester, I had many new friends among the students. Both the students and I were enjoying this type of TA-student relationship, and both of us, I believe, learned a lot from this experience.

These advantages I have enjoyed as a foreign TA may be less important in fields that do not really need background knowledge about the TA's home country. This is particularly true in the sciences and technological fields.

Technical Proficiency and Confidence

Asian TAs are the largest foreign TA group in the sciences and technological fields. It is true that most of these TAs (except perhaps those who are from India or Singapore) have had troubles with the English language, since they lacked a good English language environment at home. But on the other hand, these Asian graduate students had an unusually strong foundation in mathmatics and science even before entering this country. Based on this solid foundation and rich experience, they could provide undergraduate students with as much as their American counterparts do, if not more. Therefore, even in these fields, foreign TAs can also find advantanges.

This short article has emphasized the advantages of foreign TAs, because I want to encourage foreign TAs to be more confident about their capability of being good teachers in an

(continued on next page)

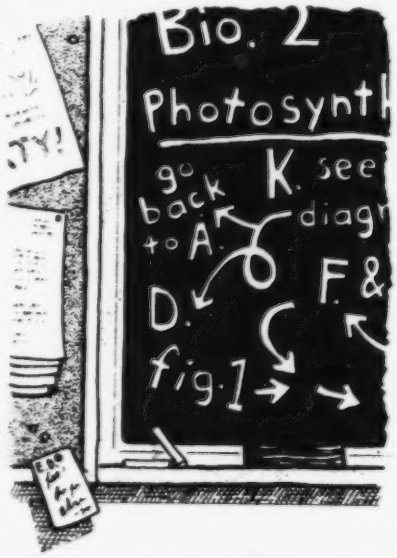
American school. Certainly I am not going to ignore the difficulties that foreign TAs are facing. The most significant of these difficulties are the language barriers and cultural differences. Foreign TAs should all work hard to improve their English proficiency, and try to understand American culture better. But since there have been few people who have addressed the issue of the advantages of foreign TAs, I would like to say a few words to foreign TAs at the end of this article: Try to make full use of your assets; it is not only that you need this TA job (for financial and practical training reasons), but also that you are needed.

John Quansheng Zhoa
U.C. Berkeley

Effective Classroom Communication

As a non-native speaker of English, the foreign TA faces many impediments to effective communication in the classroom. These range from pronunciation and accent problems to non-verbal, culturally based differences. This section presents a short list of suggestions offered by experts from around the country, and is intended to help you overcome these obstacles and become an effective instructor and communicator.

- Speak slowly in the classroom instead of assuming an American accent. If you try to pronounce each word carefully, your message will be transmitted more clearly, and your students will concentrate on what you are saying rather than how you are saying it.
- Present a confident image of a TA well prepared for the course. If students see that you have a both a good grasp of the subject matter and faith in your ability to teach, they are more likely to respect you. When you have developed interesting and exciting ways to present the course material to students, your accent, sentences, grammar and phrases--even if imperfect--will be less noticeable.
- Use the blackboard and visual aids extensively. This is especially important in the first few weeks of class, when students are adjusting to your accent and style of communication. By using the blackboard you double the students' chances of understanding the material because they will be simultaneously hearing and seeing what they need to learn. Additionally, a well-organized blackboard allows you to better structure your presentation which results in increased confidence and effectiveness.
- Be sure the students understand the material as well as your English. It is critical that you inquire as to the level of knowledge of your students. Even if your English is perfect, your students will be unable to understand you if you assume too much and teach on a higher level than they can comprehend.
- Openly acknowledge to your class that your English proficiency is limited. Ask for their cooperation in speaking slowly, avoiding slang, and explaining themselves clearly. Whenever a student in your class is saying something that you do not understand, interrupt and ask the student to begin again, slow down, explain it in some other words, or whatever is appropriate.
- Recognize that some students may use your accent as an excuse for doing poorly in your class, when their poor performance could more accurately be attributed to their own failure to pay attention and to study. Some students seem to erect a sort of mental wall as soon as they hear that you have an accent. When this happens, try to retain your patience and consider having a conversation with the person about accents in speech.
- Consult more experienced foreign TAs to determine how they successfully dealt with the myriad difficulties you face. By forming an informal network with other TAs, you can share experiences and overcome obstacles together.
- Try to learn American non-verbal communication behaviors, and use them. Observe other TAs and faculty in action in the classroom, paying close attention to where they sit, what they wear, how much they move from one place to another, how much they move their hands and arms, how fast and loud they talk, how far they stand from the person to whom they are talking, and where their eyes are directed when they are talking to an individual or group. By following American non-verbal behavior closely, you will make your students more comfortable and allow them to focus on the material being presented rather than on the style of presentation.



- In general, try to view the language problem as an interesting challenge that you and your students can approach with good humor and a cooperative spirit. If your students perceive you as interested, helpful, and friendly, they will overlook many of your language difficulties.

"I had a science class with a foreign TA once, and she made the class interesting...it was fascinating to learn how life was in Russia...that's not something you pick up everyday."
- UCLA Engineering Undergraduate

"Foreign TAs provide you with a definite enlightenment about other cultures and ideas...I think they have in many ways enriched my education.
- UCLA Humanities Undergraduate

Educational Challenges for Foreign Teaching Assistants

Any educational system is the product of complex historical, cultural, economic, and political factors. Lengthy books can be written about the history and sociology of any particular educational system, and it can be interesting and helpful to read those books. The teaching assistant has a more immediate concern, however. That concern is how to help a room full of students. What happens in that classroom? What is a TA supposed to do about it? Such questions are addressed in this section, adapted from a handbook written by Gary Althen of the University of Iowa.

1. **The students' level of preparation and educational background**

Most foreign TAs are surprised at the low level of academic preparation of some of their U.S. students, especially the freshmen. It is helpful to understand that one of the basic ideas shaping the U.S. educational system is this: As many people as possible should go as far as possible in school. Students can enter universities even though they have not learned as much as university-level students in other countries have learned. Some of the materials covered in many freshman and sophomore level courses in the United States are covered in secondary schools in other countries.

If you are teaching a class of freshmen, you should not expect them to know as much about any subject as first-year students in your country might know. The U.S. students are not necessarily any less intelligent than students at home, but they may have had a less rigorous academic experience than do primary or secondary students in your country, especially those students who follow a university-bound curriculum. U.S. freshmen and sophomores may also be at least as interested in their social lives as their academic lives.

If you are teaching upper division U.S. students, you are likely to find them appropriately knowledgeable about the subject matter of their courses (They might not be as knowledgeable about world affairs, other countries, or major political issues as you would like them to be).

2. **The student's level of motivation**

University students in many countries have studied and worked very hard to get into the university. They have learned a great deal, and they are usually very interested in learning more. This is not necessarily true of all university students in the U.S. While many students here are quite interested in their studies and want to do well in their courses, many U.S. students are not particularly interested in their studies. Those students who are the least motivated are probably freshmen in required courses. If you are teaching a course students are required to take, whether they are interested or not, you will certainly encounter students who do not want to be in the class, and who do not approach it very seriously. However, at all levels, you will find some students who are very serious about their studies, and who work very hard to get good grades. Thus, just as your class may contain students with varying degrees of academic preparation, it is likely to contain students with varying degrees of motivation.

There is no easy answer to the question of how a teacher best approaches a class that includes students of widely varying ability and interest. Most teachers try to address the interested students of average ability, and try to gain the interest of those students who seem unconcerned about the subject matter of the course.

3. **The students' general behavior**

The word most often used to describe U.S. students' classroom behavior and their attitude toward their teachers is "informal." This informality shows itself in various ways: Students may smoke, drink something, read a newspaper, or talk with a neighbor during class. They are not likely to do anything special to acknowledge the teacher's arrival or presence. They may speak to a teacher with a vocabulary and tone of voice that do not seem to convey any particular respect. They may arrive late for class, or leave before the class is over. They may ask the teacher questions in a way that seems to challenge the teacher's knowledge or ability.

You must realize that you will never get your U.S. students to act the way students in your country act. Realize that they treat all their TAs informally, not just you. And realize--even if it is difficult to do so--that the students' informal behavior does not necessarily mean that they disrespect you. U.S. students act informally toward teachers whom they like and respect very much.

Therefore, if everyone fails an exam, the teacher is at least partially at fault. Students also expect teachers to motivate their learning, to present material in a way they can understand, and to act as a "translator" of difficult passages in the text (or, for TAs, in the professor's lectures). Additionally, teachers (and especially TAs) are expected to act like allies of the student -- be friendly, be accessible, and listen to students.

4. The students' expectations of the teachers

U.S. university students are generally not as self-reliant in their academic work as are university students in many other countries. They have generally been given the idea that they should rely on their teachers to give them assignments, react to their assignments, give them frequent tests and examinations, and generally spell out in detail what they are expected to do.

You must realize that the students' expectations (or even demands) for explicit instruction and explanations are not the product of lack of intelligence, but of having been made to think over many years that this is what teachers are supposed to provide. You will probably have to provide it, at least at the beginning, or many of the students will not be able to do the work they are supposed to do for your class. Make all deadlines clear, and grade and return all examinations promptly. Meanwhile, you can try to encourage your students to take more responsibility for their own studies.

Another expectation students have is that their teachers be friendly toward them. They appreciate warmth, smiles, and some conversation that enables them to know something about the teacher as a person, not just as a teacher.

Make an effort to learn the names of your students, and be willing to engage in some informal conversation outside of the class. Read the student newspaper so that you will be informed about the topics that are likely to be discussed in informal conversations among students and between students and teachers.

"I would encourage foreign TAs to better their communication skills...by not alienating themselves from American culture, but becoming part of things here, while not losing their own sense of self and culture in the process."
- UCLA Physical Sciences Undergraduate

Suggestions for Improving Your Spoken English

In this section, we outline four suggestions to improve spoken English offered by Dr. Jeff Mellor of the University of Tennessee. Anybody can work at them, even if you have no time for extra tutoring, counseling, or instruction in English. Asking for correction of mistakes is also important because native speakers may hesitate to offer help without it. Americans can often be very direct and straightforward in many ways, but many feel inhibited about helping a foreigner find the correct way of saying something. A simple "How would you have said that?" or, "Is there a better way of saying that?" can help remove this barrier.

The first suggestion sounds simple: SPEAK ENGLISH EVERYWHERE AND AS OFTEN AS YOU CAN. This is difficult to do, especially when you have friends or family who don't use English very much. Also, it is often not easy to be a foreigner in the United States or far away from home, and it may be more comfortable to be with people who know your language, but make every effort you can to find people to speak English with: apartment mates, lab partners, people to tutor, friends from other countries, friends you meet in the International Center and so on.

Each situation has its own special vocabulary: the words you use in K-Mart or cooking dinner are quite different than the words you use in the classroom. The more situations you find to practice your English, the more it will become like that of a native speaker. Many situations like this will occur all the time. Put them to good use whenever you can.

The second suggestion sounds just as simple, but is even more difficult: TRY YOUR BEST TO IMITATE NATIVE SPEAKERS. One reason this is not easy is that many cultures, probably including yours, strongly disapprove of imitating the speech of others, particularly when their speech is different. Somehow, these feelings carry over into the language learning process and discourage us from closely imitating the exact sounds a native speaker uses. Even in one's native language, a different accent may sound a bit funny. You may have thoughts like: "It simply does not feel right or proper to really try to speak like an American" or, "I will feel silly trying to sound like an American, because I know I'm not" or, "People understand me so why should I try harder; my speech is good enough." These feelings are powerful inhibitors on attempts to improve one's English, but overcoming them also has its rewards. Think of the feeling of pride and accomplishment you would have if people assumed by your speech that you were born here.

There are so many things to imitate: The sounds of words, the tone of voice (a tone of voice which in your language means "anger" may mean "interest" in English), what words to use and when to use them. Mastering the English of the United States will make you able to advocate your ideas more effectively both inside and outside the classroom. This does not mean that you totally forget usages typical in other parts of the English speaking world, but learn to fit your speech to your surroundings.

There is a saying in English which says in effect, "Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery." The better you imitate the speech of those around you, the more positively people will respond to you.

The third suggestion takes a bit of courage: WHEN YOU THINK YOU MIGHT HAVE MADE A MISTAKE, ASK FOR THE CORRECT FORM. It is no fun to be reminded that we are not perfect, and foreign languages continually call this to our attention, particularly when we find we have made a mistake.

The fourth suggestion will help you focus your efforts and save time: FIND OUT WHAT YOU NEED TO WORK ON MOST. Just being in an English-speaking environment gives you an enormous advantage in learning English, but this advantage is even greater if you focus your efforts where they are most needed. For perfect English, all aspects of the language, pronunciation, grammar and word choice, are essential, but for you to get good, workable English some of these may need to work before the others. Try to understand WHEN Americans don't understand what you have said and try to find out WHY. Ask yourself in each problem situation, "Did I use the right word and pronounce it wrong or did I choose the wrong word?" Ask the people you talk with if they can help you identify problem areas. Consult with experts on campus who specialize in language to find the answers to these questions and try to make improvements in these areas first.

Cultural Assumptions in the American Classroom

American university students hold some basic assumptions about the purpose and function of an undergraduate education. Since these assumptions are based on a culture that probably differs from your own, this list of underlying assumptions and resulting attitudes and behaviors will enable you to understand your students' classroom behavior and expectations of you.

1. A primary goal of education is to **develop independent thinking**. Students may challenge or want to critically discuss ideas presented by the teacher; this will generally be interpreted positively (depending on the student's manner) as a sign of independence. Passive student behavior is negatively evaluated ("sheep").

2. A primary goal of undergraduate education is to **expose the student to a wide range of ideas and fields of knowledge**; specialization is assumed to occur later in college, and in post-graduate

education. In introductory courses in particular, there will be many students who (1) have little or no background in the field or related fields; (2) are not necessarily interested in the subject matter and do not plan to continue in it.

3. Teachers and students are in a cooperative enterprise to help the student succeed in understanding the course material and both **have some responsibility for the student's success**. Students expect teachers to care about their progress and take their difficulties seriously.

4. The **right to a good education is seen as a fundamental right** of all citizens. Every student may feel they have equal access to the teacher's time and attention (regardless of whether they are majors or non-majors, male or female) and will watch for teacher favoritism.

5. **Students have rights, both as individuals and consumers**, in their educational process. Students feel they have the right to control aspects of their education and to have education be made relevant to their lives; moreover, since they and their family are paying money to the university, they may treat their classes as a product which must demonstrate its worth.

Developing an Effective Midterm Evaluation Form

Many TAs have found mid-quarter evaluations to be useful tools for determining whether or not their students find them to be effective teachers. By having your students evaluate your performance in the middle of the quarter, you can ascertain how the discussion section is progressing and take steps to improve any weak areas. Below are sample midterm evaluation questions designed to elicit thoughtful responses from your students. Have them respond to the questions on a 3x5 card to generate brief, concise comments.

1. What comments can you make regarding the organization of and preparation for this discussion or laboratory section?

2. Are your TA's explanations appropriate to the students' level of understanding?

3. Have you experienced any communication problems in the classroom with the TA? If so, to what extent and in what ways have they affected you?

4. What can the TA do to help you learn the course material more thoroughly and easily?

5. Has your TA given you enough help? If not, how could he/she help you more?

Useful Phrases for Classroom Communication

Introduction
- What we are going to cover today is...
- Today, I am going to talk about...
- The important point I want to make today is...
- Last time we talked about..., today we will go on and...
- First of all, I would like to talk about...
- Today's topic is...
- What I want to do today is...

Transitions
- Now, let's see what happens.
- If that's clear, we will go on to the next point.
- Now, let's approach the problem in a different way.
- The second point I want to make is...
- Let's get back to the idea of...
- I'd like to finish talking about...before we move on.

Summaries and Conclusions
- To summarize...
- In summary...
- What we have been talking about...
- Okay, we have discussed...
- So far (up until now), I have been trying to show you...
- To conclude...
- In conclusion...
- Let's put together everything we have talked about thus far.
- The important points to remember are...
- The conclusions we can draw from this are...
- How would you summarize this theory?

Inviting Participation
- Who would like to say something?
- Could you say a little more about that?
- Can you elaborate on that?
- Do you agree?
- What do you think?
- How do you feel?
- What comparison can you make between...?
- What is the point made by the author of this article?

Clarifying Student Comments
- In other words...
- What you said is...
- I think I understand what you mean. Let me put it another way.
- If I understand you correctly, you mean...
- Would you like to elaborate on this point?
- Could you restate your point? I'm not sure I understand.

Emphasizing Points
- The point to understand is...
- Exactly.
- This brings us to our major question...
- What this means is that...

E.D.

Giving Examples
- Take...for example...
- To be more specific...
- Let me give you an example...
- For instance...

Interrupting or Redirecting Conversation
- Let me interrupt for a minute.
- Speaking of..., we need to move on to...
- That reminds me of...
- Well, we need to...
- What you were saying relates to...

"One of the worst problems I've noticed with foreign TAs is that some want to use their native language all the time...the more they use it, the less they practice at English.
- UCLA Humanities Undergraduate

SPEAK: UCLA's Test of Spoken English

UCLA offers a test, SPEAK, to evaluate the English-speaking proficiency of non-native speakers of English. The test is administered in one session, and is composed of seven sections, each dealing with a particular speech activity. For some sections of the test, you are asked to read aloud a portion of text; in other sections, you describe an object or series of events; in still other sections, you are asked to express your opinion on familiar issues and describe the content of a course syllabus.

Each section of SPEAK has a time limit. The test tape announces the beginning and end of each section. You should answer questions in a clear and natural tone of voice, but speak loudly enough for the machine to clearly record what you say. The machine recording your responses is not stopped at any time, and your score is based on what is recorded on the tape. To help you overcome any nervousness, you may wish to practice speaking into a tape recorder before the day of the test.

The SPEAK exam is scored by raters at the Test of Spoken English division of the Educational Testing Service. Once scored, the results are sent to your department which will inform you of your performance. The score for overall comprehensibility is reported on a scale that ranges from 0 to 300 rounded to the nearest ten. Descriptions of the performance indicated by each score range follow:

0-90: Overall comprehensibility too low in even the simplest types of speech.

100-140: Generally not comprehensible due to frequent pauses and/or rephrasing, pronunciation errors, limited grasp of vocabulary, and lack of grammatical control.

150-190: Generally comprehensible but with frequent errors in pronunciation, grammar, choice of vocabulary items, and with some pauses and rephrasing.

200-240: Generally comprehensible but with some errors in pronunciation, grammar, choice of vocabulary items, or with pauses or occasional rephrasing.

250-300: Completely comprehensible in normal speech, with occasional pronunciation or grammatical errors in very colloquial phrases.

The SPEAK exam is offered about nine times a year, immediately preceding or following each quarter. For test times and dates, as well as any other general information about SPEAK, check with your department or stop by the Language Laboratory in 190 Powell.

Resources for Foreign Teaching Assistants

1. **Departmental Resources**

The campuswide TA Training Program supports TA training activities in 28 departments by hiring experienced TAs known as TA Consultants. They, along with faculty involved in TA training, are aware of many campus resources on pedagogy and ways to improve classroom communication. These departments have 495 seminars on pedagogy, as well as provide opportunities for TAs to observe one another's discussion sections so that constructive criticism and helpful hints may be exchanged. The TA Consultant in your department will also, upon request, make arrangements to have your section videotaped. You may then view that videotape on your own, or choose to have the TA Consultant or faculty advisor view and discuss it with you. If your department does not have a TA training program, please contact the campuswide TA Training Program for further information.

The Graduate Advisor, individual faculty, and fellow graduate students in your own department may also have ideas on ways to improve communication skills and teaching competence. You may also want to approach non-native English speaking faculty members or TAs in your department who may have faced similar problems in the past. They may very well be the best resources for learning how to improve your communication skills and teaching ability.

2. **English 34**

UCLA offers a course, taught by faculty in the ESL section, geared towards improving the communication skills of non-native English speaking teaching assistants. This course, English 34, provides participants with guided practice on making academic presentations. A small class size (approximately 15 students) allows for exciting interaction and ample opportunity for students to improve their spoken English.

English 34 is offered two or three times a year, and enrollment priority is given to TAs or future TAs. The class meets twice a week for two hours each session, and carries four units of credit. Students may take the course for a letter grade or on a Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory basis. Prerequisites are successful completion of English 33C or exemption from the English as a Second Language Placement Exam (ESLPE). For more information, please call the ESL section at 825-4378.

3. **Instructional Media Library**

The Instructional Media Library, located in 46 Powell, maintains a large collection of educational films, videotapes, and slide/tape modules, some of which are particularly well-suited to a non-native speaker of English who is unfamiliar with the American way of life. Foreign TAs may view any of the library's materials for free, and may arrange rentals from other sources through the library.

4. **The International Student Center**

The International Student Center (ISC) is designed to meet the cultural, social, recreational, and educational needs of students and community members. ISC provides direct services to foreign students by providing housing referrals, community orientation presentations, contacts with American students and community leaders, and placement in local support groups. The Center provides a comfortable and

informal gathering place for foreign and American students, and has rooms in which to hold classes, meetings, receptions, parties, and programs. ISC also has an international art gallery and a reading room with an international array of magazines.

The International Student Center is located at 1023 Hilgard Ave. (phone: 208-4587, 825-3384) and is open Monday from 9am to 6pm, and Tuesday through Friday from 9am to 10pm.

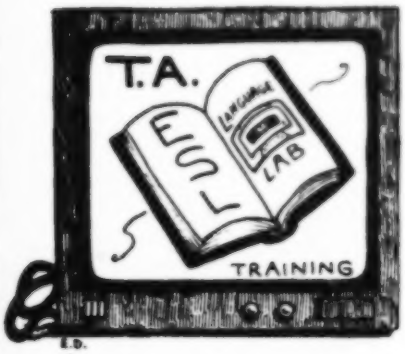
5. **Language Laboratory**

Located in 190 Powell, the Language Laboratory has a number of audio tapes, some with accompanying texts, that are intended for use by non-native speakers of English and could be helpful to a foreign TA. Some tapes provide drilled practice in English pronunciation and usage, while others introduce the listener to American culture and society.

Tapes must be used in the laboratory, but no restrictions are placed on the number of uses or length of time users may spend in the laboratory practicing language skills.

This list represents some audio tapes relevant to the needs of foreign TAs. All are available at the Language Laboratory:

1. The American Way
2. Listening In and Speaking Out
3. Understanding Academic Lectures



6. **The Office of International Students and Scholars**

The Office of International Students and Scholars (OISS) provides counseling and general assistance to UCLA's foreign students and scholars. Its staff, which includes professional and peer counselors, is uniquely equipped to deal with the concerns and needs of people from other cultures. The Office serves in an advisory or referral capacity on questions regarding such matters as Immigration and Naturalization, English language resources, academic assistance, housing assistance, financial aid, cross-cultural adjustment, and personal matters. OISS holds regular seminars, workshops, and conferences on these and other topics of practical concern and academic significance to international students and scholars.

OISS administers the Language Exchange Program, which matches native speakers of various languages with students learning those languages for conversation practice. The goal of this program is to increase interaction between UCLA American students and foreign students as well as to increase the language competence of both groups. As a result, it would be particularly beneficial to a foreign TA seeking an informal introduction to UCLA.

OISS also publishes a "Foreign Students Guide" containing useful information on such topics as getting settled, UCLA's educational system, money matters, health services, foreign students and the law, student services and activities, and American cultural patterns. The Guide is free and available to anyone who wants a copy at OISS.

OISS is located at 695 Circle Drive South, Westwood Plaza (phone: 825-1681), and open Monday through Friday from 8am to 5pm.

7. **Publications**

George Brown, Lecturing and Explaining (New York; Methuen and Co., 1978): A self-contained course in effective lecturing, this text is used in English 34, UCLA's course for foreign TAs who have language difficulties. Reading the book will take little time and introduce you to a wealth of lecturing strategies and techniques immediately applicable to the UCLA classroom.

The TA at UCLA Newsletter

Each issue of the newsletter, a collection of pertinent articles written by experts, deals with a different aspect of being a TA at UCLA. Recent newsletters have focused on such topics as "Self-Evaluation," "Grading," "Impro-ving Classroom Relationships," "Cheating," and "Undergraduate Instruction." Contact the TA Training Program in 80 Powell for copies of past and current issues.

8. **UCLA Extension**

The American Language Center of UCLA's Extension Program offers a number of ESL and communication skills courses which a foreign TA may find helpful in improving speaking skills and increasing overall teaching effectiveness. The ESL courses are the same as those taught during regular session by UCLA's ESL department and may be taken for full credit by foreign TAs enrolled at UCLA with the consent of the appropriate Dean.

The courses are offered during evening hours or on weekends on campus. For further information, please consult the UCLA Extension catalogue, which is distributed before each quarter, or call the American Language Center at 825-9068.

Credits

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